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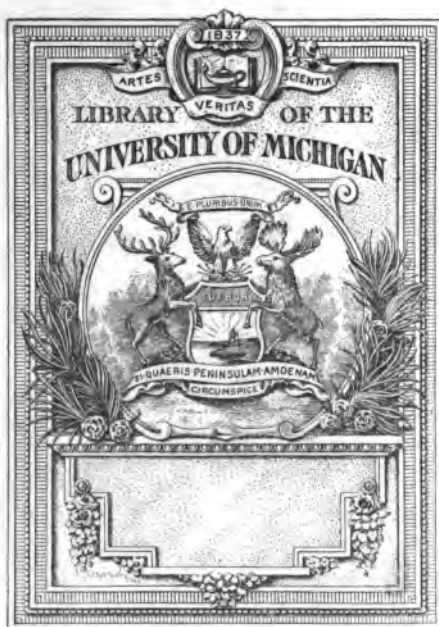
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# The Making of an Orator

With Examples from Great Masterpieces  
of Ancient and Modern Eloquence

By

John O'Connor Power

Of the Middle Temple, Barrister-at-Law  
And sometime M. P. for the  
County of Mayo

" Nothing would be done at all if a man waited till he could do it so well that no one could find fault with it. What, then, can I desire or pray for but this, that what I say well may be blessed to those who hear it, and that what I might have said better may be blessed to me by increasing my own dissatisfaction with myself? "

NEWMAN.

G. P. Putnam's Sons  
New York and London  
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1906



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**The Knickerbocker Press, New York**

## PREFACE.

The object of this book is to indicate in popular language a course of practice in oratory, based on the writer's observation and experience, in the House of Commons, at the Bar, and on the Platform. It is intended for students, young or old, who have had no practice in public speaking, and for speakers who are not unwilling to consider suggestions made by another.

The various examples have been selected as models of the form and structure of great speeches, and will, it is hoped, appeal to all lovers of noble eloquence as well as to those who aspire to oratorical eminence.



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“It is a mark of an instructed mind to rest satisfied with that degree of precision which the nature of the subject admits, and not to seek for exactness where only an approximation to the truth is possible.”

*Aristotle.*

“I consider that with regard to all precepts the case is this, not that orators by adhering to them have obtained distinction in eloquence, but that certain persons have noticed what men of eloquence practised of their own accord, and formed rules accordingly: so that eloquence has not sprung from art, but art from eloquence.”

*Cicero.*

“The work of the orator from its very inception is inextricably mixed up with practice. It is cast in the mould offered to him by the mind of his hearers. It is an influence principally received from his audience, so to speak, in vapour, which he pours back upon them in a flood.”

*Gladstone.*

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# The Making of an Orator

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

**A** BRILLIANT English scholar—a poet and critic of great distinction, undertook some years ago to give a hundred lectures in the United States, and his agent has since informed the public that the lectures were delivered as agreed upon, but never heard, even by those sitting in the front rows. They were read from manuscript, in a voice that was inaudible; and those who went to hear the lecturer had to be satisfied with looking upon him, without hearing a word of what he said. He understood many languages, ancient and modern, and was absolutely incapable of addressing a public audience in his native tongue. This is not an exceptional instance of the want of vocal training; it illustrates the general neglect of those exercises which are suitable and necessary for effective public speaking. The voice is the



orator's chief instrument, though the eye and the hands add their own commentary to what he says. Its cultivation and management, therefore, should be the first object of the speaker's care and attention. The simplest and readiest method of exercising the voice is that of reading aloud. How few good or even tolerable readers there are, we know from daily experience, in listening to the reading of reports at society meetings, of resolutions at a conference, of documents in a court of law, of the sacred text in churches of all denominations, and of questions and resolutions in both Houses of Parliament. Those who read badly, speak badly, and conversely, those who speak badly, read badly, too. It may seem superfluous to urge the self-evident proposition, that if one is to read or speak with effect, he ought to read or speak so as to be heard, but everyone knows cases in which this primary and essential condition of communication between speaker and audience is calmly ignored. Audible utterance in reading and speaking is a simple accomplishment attainable by the humblest boy or girl in the poorest village school, who is properly instructed, as well as by those who receive the higher education, and its neglect in either case

is inexcusable. If all who read to us for our instruction or entertainment were to read distinctly we should have much to be thankful for. But the praise of good reading will not be given to mere distinctness, valuable and precious as it is. A reader may make himself perfectly audible and yet fail so completely to convey either the force or beauty, the meaning or charm, of what he reads as to destroy its whole effect on the mind of the listener. But if he reads well, if he shows an appreciation of the whole tenor and character of the composition, so that each thought, or sentiment, or image, receives its appropriate rendering, we cannot repress our delight, or withhold our grateful applause.

The common excuse for a speaker who is inaudible is, that he has a bad voice. I am convinced that in nine cases out of ten this excuse is wholly groundless. The voice is not weak naturally, and it wants nothing but exercise to make it perfectly audible. In the case of the majority of men and women the speaking voice is neglected, and as it is never properly exercised its capacity is an unknown quantity, even to themselves. If the hand or the arm were condemned to inaction, as the voice so often is, it would lose its natural power in like

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manner, and be unfit for use. The voice, even for purposes of conversation is, in many instances, in a state of arrested development.

Some voices, it is true, are of more limited compass than others; but most are full, resonant, and melodious, of great range and flexibility—capable of venting, at one moment, a tempest of passion, and of issuing, at another, in soft, low, murmuring accents that linger pleasantly in the ear. In both cases reading aloud is advantageous—to correct the defects of the one, to improve and strengthen the other. “If,” said the great critic, Ruskin, “I could have a son or a daughter possessed of but one accomplishment in life, it should be that of good reading.” When elocution is made a part of education, but not before, this accomplishment, so useful in itself and so valuable in the elementary training of an orator, will be within reach of every student. The late Professor J. R. Seeley, speaking at the Royal Institution, said:

“It is more than one hundred years since Bishop Berkeley propounded the question, whether half the learning and talent of England were not lost because elocution was not taught in schools and colleges. This same question might be repeated now; and it is not merely for its practical use in after life to those

whose profession demands public speaking, that I desire to see elocution made a part of education, but because I think that, by this means more than any other, may be evoked in the minds of the young a taste for poetry and eloquence.”

The student should aim first of all at distinct articulation, which is a purely physical exercise. He can practise it with the aid of a single companion, by reading to him, or speaking to him, at certain distances which may be regulated so as to test the voice in the three keys—the high, the low, and the middle. The first we use in addressing persons a long way off, or in moments of excitement; the second when they are quite near us, and when there is no occasion for any special effort; or, when addressing persons near or far, we have something to say of serious or solemn import; the third or middle key is the key of animated conversation, which is the one best adapted for good reading or good speaking. Correct pronunciation takes us one step further, but as this depends upon the practice of the best speakers, we must find out what that is, or trust to the guidance of a competent teacher. The period of youth, when the tongue is pliant to every demand of the voice, is the golden time for the acquisition of good articulation,

and correct pronunciation, but inveterate provincialisms have been known to give way to instructed discipline at a later age. Pronunciation embraces accent and emphasis, the first, denoting the stress laid upon a particular syllable, the second that laid upon a particular word. The proper distribution of emphasis in reading or speaking is of the utmost importance, because if it were placed on the wrong word the whole sense of a passage might be materially altered. In ordinary speaking, a mistake of this kind seldom occurs, for emphasis in speech is dictated by a natural impulse which the speaker obeys almost unconsciously, whereas in reading we are engaged in an attempt to reproduce the thoughts of another, and fail sometimes to enter into their full meaning. It must, however, be remembered that in the delivery of a long speech, emphasis should be economised so that the voice may not be unduly taxed.

The due observance of grammatical stops, which is necessary to bring out the sense, in reading, is also required in speaking, if only to enable the speaker to breathe freely, and to speak with the minimum of physical exertion. What is known as the rhetorical pause does not depend on grammatical construction; it

arises from the nature of the subject-matter of the speech, or reading, imparting to what immediately follows some special significance, and, like the emphasis on a particular word, it suggests a commentary of its own. The last point in elocution which I shall mention here is modulation. Its uses are well understood by all good readers and speakers. It saves the delivery of both from monotony, and when judiciously applied, it invests a speech or reading with dramatic force and artistic beauty. The lowering or raising of the voice is often attended also with the happiest results in fixing the attention of the audience.

A great speech involves necessarily some kind of preparation, but the method will vary according to the taste, temperament, necessities, and habits of the speaker. It will depend upon the nature of the subject, the occasion which has suggested it, the character of the audience or tribunal before which the speech is to be delivered; whether it is an opening statement, or a reply in debate; and upon a variety of other circumstances governing each case. A speaker must, as far as possible, master his subject, and become so completely saturated with its principles and details, that it will form part of himself, filling his memory

with examples, his imagination with appropriate illustrations, and his whole conception with the glow of genuine feeling and conviction. The ancient orators, and those of the French Revolution, wrote much in preparation and many great speakers of our own day have followed their example. Yet the labour of writing, and learning by heart, is enormous, and those who have to plead frequently in court, or take an active part in the debates of Parliament, are obliged to rely mainly, if not exclusively, on extempore effort. They could not otherwise perform the work they have to do. The writing method is obviously impracticable when a reply is called for on the spur of the moment, so that a speaker to be equal to all occasions should be well exercised in extempore practice. No man can gain the ear of the House of Commons, for example, who is not a debater, no matter how skilful he may be in making an opening statement, or in the exposition of a complicated subject. The life of Parliament as a deliberative assembly, is in its debates. There is some reality in the encounter between man and man, when one replies to another, there and then; and he who successfully repels an attack on himself or his cause never fails to

win the sympathy, if not the open approbation of both sides of the House. Lord Lyndhurst once remarked to a friend:

“Brougham says that he prepares the great passages in his speeches; and he weaves them with wonderful dexterity into the extempore portions. The seams are never visible. I am not able to perform that double operation. Such an effort of verbal memory would interfere with the free exercise of my mind upon the parts which were not prepared. My practice is to think my subject over and over to any extent you please; but with the exception of certain phrases, which necessarily grow out of the process of thinking, I am obliged to leave the wording of my argument to the moment of delivery.”

The difference in the two methods of preparation is, as I have said before, very much a manner of habit and temperament. Each one must select for himself the method which he thinks will enable him to achieve the best result. Canning and Plunkett, and many others, adopted the method attributed to Brougham, and many have pursued Lyndhurst's method for the excellent reason which influenced him—the desire to preserve the free exercise of his mind from beginning to end.

Great extempore speeches in parliamentary debate are made by men who have been trained



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in debate, and who are familiar with the questions upon which they speak. If the matter is entirely novel, and they find any difficulty in dealing with it, long practice has made them skilful in the use of all the expedients of delay. The proposal is very good in the abstract, but it is inopportune, or it is not supported by public opinion, or it is of so much importance that it requires fuller consideration, or its practicability has not been proved, or, if adopted, it might have an effect directly opposite to that intended by its advocates. Charles James Fox was the greatest debater of his day in the House of Commons, and he has told us himself that for years he made it a rule to speak at least once every night, and this constant practice was *his* mode of preparing himself for those extempore speeches with which he illumined the most obscure subjects, and successfully assailed the most powerful ministers. The trained debater has as great an advantage over an ordinary speaker, as a trained athlete has over an untrained one. He knows all the rules of the game. He is always ready and never surprised. The debater can detect a fallacy before his opponent has concluded the sentence in which it is conveyed, and supply its correction without a moment's hesita-

tion. No groundless assumption escapes his notice; he marks down every slip; he is not deceived by side issues or quibbles about words, or the plea of innocence or indifference where wrong has been done, nor is he thrown off his guard by counter accusations, nor diverted by assumed airs of levity, nor frightened off by a spurious outburst of indignation. And more important than all, he knows from previous encounters his own strength and his own weakness. On occasions of a social or ceremonial character speeches are frequently written, for more depends, in these cases, upon the taste and judgment shown by the speaker, than upon his subject-matter, and errors are less likely to occur when one takes the pains to set down beforehand what he intends to say. Few speakers would undertake to pronounce an eulogium on a great personage without written preparation, through a very natural fear that an extempore effort would do less than justice to the subject. All literary appreciations—estimates of the genius of a writer, and of his place in literature—owe their power and felicity, I apprehend, to the free use of the pen, and much careful study. No gifts however brilliant will enable a speaker to dispense with method and practice. Many of the

speeches delivered by popular speakers on the platform are written speeches. Some Parliamentary speakers, who can speak very well extemporaneously, and are good debaters, write out their platform speeches, either because the local opposition is ever ready to take advantage of any indiscretion, and it behoves them to be more on their guard, or because the written speech finds its way more easily into the press, or because the speakers speak better when they have taken the trouble to prepare in writing. In Parliament, on the other hand, no man is master of the time of the House, or of its proceedings. No one can predict absolutely what may be the drift of the debates; and written preparation there, except for occasional, set, speeches is generally impracticable; but for a platform engagement one chooses his own date, at his own convenience, and knowing also beforehand the character of the audience before which he is to appear, he can prepare himself in any way he pleases. The practised writer has resources known only to himself, which he has acquired by practice. Thackeray used to say there were a thousand ideas in a man's head of which he had no conception until he took a pen in his hand. The same is true of a practised speaker. His mind

is quiescent till he rises to speak. The moment he stands before an audience he has command of his subject. He takes in the whole argument in one comprehensive view. He knows what to say, what not to say, and when to sit down. It is the untrained and unpractised speaker alone who persists in addressing the audience when everyone present would be thankful if he would resume his seat.

A weakness for making long speeches is a characteristic of the novice in oratory. I knew a man of considerable political ability who ruined his career by too much talk. He used to come down to the House with a sheaf of notes which in the course of the evening he contrived to fire off at the Government. His speeches were prepared, I should say, out of the morning papers on his own side of politics, as he faithfully rehearsed all their stock arguments, at unconscionable length. His industry was, however, undeniable and marked him out for a subordinate place in the Government when his party returned to power—a place which in due time he obtained. I knew him well, but there was one point on which we could never agree, and that was the appropriate length of a good speech. I remonstrated with him on the amplitude of his

harangues. The sight of his notes was in itself so formidable that members fled from the House when he succeeded in catching the Speaker's eye. His defence was a curious one. He had, he said, taken note of the length of many of the admittedly great speeches of former times, and he had not found one which would not have taken at least an hour in delivery. It was in vain that I urged my own personal recollection in favour of some great speeches that were much shorter—Lincoln's at Gettysburg for example—and contended that the great speeches which he had in his mind were not considered great on account of their length, but because they were utterances on great subjects, and were adequate to the great occasions on which they were delivered. His speeches were equally long, no matter what was the subject or the occasion, and he seemed to have no sense of the relative importance of different subjects and different occasions. He forced himself into the Government, however, and managed to keep his place during their first term of office, but on their resumption of a second term he had talked away all his influence, and was accordingly excluded from the ministry—a victim to his own unregulated loquacity.

The true orator knows exactly how long he ought to speak on every subject, and on every occasion. He knows that it is always better to be too short than too long, but that the matter is really determined for him by the nature of the subject, and the nature of the occasion, by all the circumstances, by what has preceded his speech, and by what he has reason to anticipate will follow it. At one time he is engaged in a humble part, on a question of little interest, and his speech is appropriate to a small subject and a small occasion, and he spares both himself and his audience. At another he is committed to a task which calls forth all his powers, which he must discharge at all risks, and he bends himself to the work before him, conscious of the great issues that depend upon his exertions. The question of whether his speech shall be long or short never enters his head. His one absorbing determination is that it shall be adequate, that it shall achieve the object for which it is made. How far it is calculated to attain that object is for him the only test of its worth.

Again, want of training is conspicuous where there are a great many speakers, all anxious to speak, at a meeting which is limited in point of time. An evening meeting is con-

sidered long if it exceeds two hours, unless the occasion is one of very exceptional interest, yet it is no uncommon occurrence to see the earlier speakers at such a meeting monopolise the whole of the time which was intended to be shared equally by all who have been specially invited to speak. The monopolisation is not always deliberate. It arises frequently from / the inability of speakers to stop once they have been set going. Speakers of this class are generally without order or method, and they are powerless to extricate themselves from the rambling incoherence in which they become involved. I remember an instance of this at a meeting in the country. A man who had not been announced to speak obtained the permission of the Chairman to say a few words in support of the first resolution submitted, on condition that he would not speak more than a few minutes. The principal speaker of the evening had travelled a long distance for the special purpose of addressing this meeting. The audience assembled had come to hear him; and these facts were duly impressed upon the volunteer orator, in order to make sure of his not standing between the audience and the speaker they wished to hear. He pledged himself to the conditions laid down; but from

the moment he rose he forgot all about them, and about everything, except the pleasure he derived from his possession of the meeting. When he had long exceeded his limit the Chairman whispered to him that the time was up, without avail. There were movements of impatience, and cries of "time" among the audience, but he took no notice. He went steadily on. The Chairman protested in further whispers, but refrained from exercising his authority. The speaker answered with a smile, and continued as if the whole evening were his own. The audience, now fairly indignant, shouted lustily "time," "time," all over the hall. The speaker paused in mid career, and there was a sense of relief on the platform. At last he was finished! Not at all, he only pulled up to remark that "notwithstanding the unreasonable interruptions of a few persons near him he would now address himself to the main point of the argument!" There was of course an explosion of angry feeling. The audience rose against him, and shouted at him wrathfully; but he could not understand why, and the Chairman had to lay a hand upon him and draw him gently back into his seat, in order to make way for the next speaker. He was a



friend, nevertheless, not an enemy, of the object of the meeting, and he meant well all through. No trained orator could place himself in such a ridiculous position—the position of being shouted down by a friendly audience, unless indeed his aim was to obstruct the proceedings, and talk against time. If this unlucky speaker understood his business, he would have compressed into five, or at most, ten minutes, some telling argument, on a single aspect of the question under discussion, and then retired—with perhaps an augmented reputation for eloquence, and a desire, on the part of his hearers, to listen to him at greater length on the next occasion. He had not the skill to do this, nor had he the sense to remain silent, and the consequence was inevitable discomfort. Let me contrast with his failure, before a sympathetic audience, the success of a practised speaker before a hostile one—a speaker who showed that he could be trusted absolutely to sit down at the right moment. The scene was a turbulent public meeting, during a contested election, in a London constituency. The speaker, who was the candidate, agreed with his Chairman that he would speak at length if he were accorded anything like a fair hearing, but that he would stop when-


ever, in the judgment of the Chairman, his address might prudently terminate. Those on the platform could hear the Chairman at each stage of the address doling out additional time to the orator on his legs. It was doled out in measures of five minutes, and the speaker devoted just about five minutes to each point, with an occasional retort on interrupters, of whom there was a goodly number present. The speech kept the meeting together, and compelled a hearing from unwilling auditors because the speaker understood the exigencies of the occasion and did not lose his head. He held his audience until he had said all that was essential, and then wisely released them before the interruptions ripened into actual disturbance.

## CHAPTER II

### THE STATEMENT OF FACTS

**W**HEN the student of oratory knows how to manage his voice he may think seriously of making his first speech. He will be fortunate if he has acquired also the habit of observing the rules of grammar, for, though violations of these are overlooked in the ease of conversation, they are not excusable in a formal discourse. Errors of pronunciation accompany many of us from infancy to old age, and sometimes prove to be ineradicable because we have contracted them in our earliest days, and they possess all the vitality of local custom. Yet if we have profited by our reading lessons we ought to be free from those aggravated faults which strike unpleasantly on the cultivated ear. We ought to know something also of the nature of tone, manner, and gesture, as aids to the proper expression of the emotions; but anything like proficiency in the fine art of reading will not be expected from us so soon. The one indispensable requisite for the student is,

that he should be able to speak audibly before entering upon the first stage of his practice in oratory. If he suffers from any vocal defects the sooner they are cured the better, and their cure will be a much easier thing, probably, in youth than in older years. In preparing his first speech, he will encounter the unexpected difficulties which all beginners have to surmount. If he can adopt the method of some favourite orator whom he has observed and studied, well and good. He has perhaps already learned by heart, and recited, fine passages from some of the greatest masters of English eloquence, but these are of no use to him at the present stage except as exercises in elocution. He must begin at the beginning; and if he is wise he will select for his first model a speech which is neither rhetorical nor argumentative, but simply a plain statement of facts. Order and method, which are so important in written compositions, are of still greater importance in those which are spoken, and he who would acquire a good method cannot too early learn how to make a plain statement of facts, in the manner best adapted to the object for which he speaks. The task is not so simple as it appears. There are orators of considerable re-



pute who are deficient in this elementary part of their art. The utility of it has not been pointed out to them, and they have not themselves perceived its importance. They are accustomed to concern themselves more with the ornamental features of a speech, forgetting that the humbler parts are really fundamental. How often has one heard in the course of a rhetorically fervid address, the question put *sotto voce*, "What is he driving at?" The speaker is appealing to the emotions of his audience while they are eagerly waiting for the facts, which he has either entirely withheld, or stated so clumsily that they fail to make any distinct impression. What a speaker of this description wants is the power of simple narration, which may be acquired by exercises not beyond the capacity of a schoolboy, but which in its highest development forms an essential part of some of the grandest and most elaborate feats of eloquence.

The events of a single day, in the most prosaic of lives, will often supply the student with abundant material for an exercise in narration. If his schoolfellows can be induced to listen, he may deliver his maiden speech to them, or address it to the members of his own family, where, presumably, he could count on a sym-

pathetic audience; but in either case, it must be a genuine speech,—a speech delivered standing, and subject to the risks of interruption and criticism, as well as the chances of encouragement and approval. His subject may be anything from a cricket-match, which he has seen played, to a motor accident on the King's highway which he has witnessed; and if he can only enumerate the principal facts of the one or the other clearly, consecutively, and concisely, so that his hearers can see in imagination what he has himself seen in reality, he will have made a long stride in the art of oratory. To do this he must not only state all the salient facts, but narrate them in such order that their relative importance can be duly appreciated. He must not hope to accomplish all this at the first or second attempt, for the power of speaking lucidly, even in simple unadorned narrative, comes only with that of thinking lucidly. Both powers may, however, be cultivated simultaneously, and the student will find by experience that they act and react upon one another, to his advantage, by repeated practice. What I am trying to urge is that nothing should be attempted in the direction of rhetorical elegance, or intricate argumentation, until substantial progress

has been made in the acquisition of the power of arranging facts and stating them in their proper order. The beginner, to whom rhetoric and logic are now denied, must remember that, as I have already indicated, this power is, among orators of the present day, as rare as it is valuable. When he has acquired it he will be in the proud position of being able, so far as oratorical ability without technical instruction is concerned, to undertake that portion of the work of an advocate at the Bar which is designated the opening speech. What is called the opening speech in a court of law consists simply in a statement of the facts on which the plaintiff or defendant relies in the action. This statement is made by the plaintiff or defendant himself, or his advocate. It contains, of course, references to the evidence by which he hopes to prove his case; but it affords no opportunity whatever for rhetorical display, and there can be no argument of any kind, unless on some technical objection to the proceedings, until the evidence of the witnesses has been taken. An argument in the opening would be an argument on assumptions, and not on facts. When the facts have been brought out by the plaintiff's advocate, he "sums up" on his own side and argues, but

in the opening he is restricted to a mere statement. Yet how very differently is this opening statement made by different speakers? In the hands of one it is a confused jumble of assertions, which it is hopeless to unravel or understand, and we await the story of the witnesses to discover what it all means. In the case of another it is clear, so far as it goes, but neither coherent nor convincing; wanting in proportion, perhaps, and, for some indefinable reason, by no means calculated to make that good first impression which it should be the opener's aim to achieve. In the hands of the accomplished advocate, however, this plain and simple statement becomes in a great case a supreme work of art. The most complicated issues are made clear, the driest details are made intelligible, if not interesting, each fact, or document, or circumstance, finds its appropriate place, and the good order of the whole constitutes in itself a presumption in favour of the client, though no formal argument has been advanced from beginning to end. When I suggest that the young orator should begin with a speech which consists only of a statement of facts, I would not conceal from him that on a difficult subject, even this kind of speech would be more than he



could manage. He must content himself at the beginning with simple subjects, and when he has mastered them learn, by continued practice, how to deal with those which are more complex. But I would insist once more that he must put all thought of rhetoric or logic out of his head until he is able to tell a plain tale without ambiguity or circumlocution.

The usual method of study is, in many cases, in the reverse order to that which is here recommended. Boys who have been exercised in reciting the most eloquent passages of great orators try their hands at imitations of these before they know the real structure of a speech, or the parts of which it is composed. The recitations are to be encouraged, for two good reasons: they are, in the first place, good vocal exercises, and in the second, they serve to fix the mind of the student upon the goal to which he must aspire, the lofty heights which are trodden with ease by the finished orator whose power of expression is limited only by the resources of the language he employs. Their utility for the beginner stops there. He must be satisfied with humbler models in the first stages of his practice, and then when he is well grounded he can pass on with all the more facility to higher things.

In the mind of a great orator there is no distinction in the different qualities of style. He uses them all indiscriminately to suit his purpose, and he can do so with success because he is master of them all. I am confident, nevertheless, that the young student who may honour me with a perusal of these pages, and is thereby led to adopt the order of study I suggest, will have no cause to regret his decision. When he has the power of imparting information clearly and accurately, he has the power of instructing his audience in that important department of knowledge—the knowledge of facts—upon which the determination of most of the controversies of life depends. It has been calculated that nine tenths of our lawsuits turn upon questions of fact, and not upon questions of law. It is equally true that a great proportion of the quarrels of nations arise from ignorance and not from indifference to the eternal distinction between right and wrong. Great, therefore, is the power of clear and intelligible statement, in order that in every case with which speech is concerned, the truth, and the truth alone, may be established and maintained.

I shall have occasion in the course of my remarks to quote from, and to analyse,

speeches of orators of different shades of opinion, but these speeches will be selected without any regard to the views held by the speaker, and solely for purposes of illustration. Among the orators of the last generation distinguished for clearness of statement the name of Mr. Cobden at once suggests itself. He had other high qualities as a speaker; a vocabulary of homely expressive English, a sense of humour, and powers of argumentation of great strength and acuteness; but it was his power of clear statement on which he most relied, and which most favourably impressed his contemporaries. I turn to a volume of his speeches, and on opening it, at hazard, I find one which might well serve as a model for the young speaker. The speech was delivered in London, on June the 18th, 1845, on the subject of the Corn-laws. It is a long speech, the earlier part of which—more than one third of the whole—is nothing but an account of the position occupied by the question in which the speaker was interested at that time, and this account is given with as much ease and freedom as if he were describing a walk in a country lane. A few paragraphs will show the character of an address

which was probably heard by many thousands, and in which they were deeply interested:

“ I could not help thinking as my friend the Chairman was giving you those interesting and somewhat novel statistics, that I am following him at some disadvantage, inasmuch as I fear there is little chance of my being able to communicate anything so new, or even so agreeable, to you as he has done. He has just returned from the North, where he has been making up his accounts. I have just come from a Railway Committee, where I have been on the tread-wheel for the last three weeks — as much a prisoner as though I were in Newgate, and with the disadvantage of being conscious that I am in a place where there is more time wasted than even in that distinguished gaol. Yet even under the roof of St. Stephen's there has been something of late passing of rather a cheering character, and I think I may say I do bring good news from the House of Commons. It is not such a bad place, after all, especially for agitation. Last year we made a little mistake at the beginning of the session; we laid our heads together, and came to the conclusion that we could employ ourselves better out of doors in visiting some of the counties and rural districts, and agitating a little in the country; this year we have changed our tactics, and we thought that Parliament, after all, was the best place for agitating. You speak with a loud voice when talking on the floor of that House; you are heard all over the

world, and, if you have anything to say that hits hard it reaches all over the Kingdom."

This is all very simple, and with the exception of that effective stroke of quiet humour about Members wasting more time over their work than prisoners on the tread-mill, might have been said by anyone in the audience who was acquainted with the facts. Mr. Cobden proceeded:

"We determined to confine ourselves during this session to Parliament, and I think the result has shown that it is the best field for our labours. We brought forward in succession of motions. We began with one in which we challenged our opponents to meet us in Committee and examine the farmers and landowners, to show what benefit the Corn-laws had done them; they refused our proposal,—and I have no doubt the country put the right interpretation on their motives. Then my friend Mr. Bright, who is an active-minded man, looked about, and thought that, among all those burdens upon land, he did not think there was one greater than the game that was eating up their produce. He felt anxious, if possible, to point out to the landowners where they could find a margin in their account-books to turn a penny, and compensate themselves for repealing the Corn-laws by abolishing the Game-laws. And, therefore, he moved for his Committee, and was more lucky than I have been, for he has got it; and I have no doubt

that in due time, when the secrets of that prison-house come out at the end of the session, he will be able to show you, from the mouths of the most intelligent farmers in the country, that there is one burden which they consider heavier than all their local taxes, country-rates, highway-rates, and even their poor-rates — and that is the burden of these excessive game preserves. Then we had Mr. Ward's motion, by way of sweeping the ground clear for Mr. Villiers to pass over with his annual motion."

Thus the speaker goes on adding fact to fact, skilfully, piling up the evidence in favour of his cause, and though each fact in itself seems of little moment, the cumulative effect of the whole is very impressive, and I have no doubt that those who were interested in the subject listened patiently to every word. Mr. Cobden rarely permits himself, in this part of his speech, to use an argument even incidentally. He just inserts a link, now and again, to bind the facts together, as in the following example:—

"Moral force means governing according to right principles, when those principles are acknowledged to be true. They may govern by a species of moral force when they can manage to persuade men that, while they are governing wrong, they are governing right; but they never can rule by moral force when

they themselves avow that they are carrying on principles which they believe to be unjust and untrue."

After which, he resumes his simple statement thus:—

"I think we ought to feel deeply indebted to such meetings as this, which have stood by this question; which have cheered on public men in its advocacy; which have aided in disseminating the knowledge that has gone forth from this vast building, in which we have brought the public mind on both sides so far to defer to the expression of public opinion as to show that they are bound to acknowledge the justice of our principles. Now there is but one universal opinion, that is, that it is a question of time. Three or four years ago everybody used to tell me that it was a species of insanity to think of carrying this principle of a total repeal of the Corn-laws. Now, everybody says, 'There is no doubt you will effect the total repeal, the only question is as to the time.' We have narrowed the controversy; we have reduced it down to one little word. The whole question hinges upon one monosyllable—When? I think the *Times* newspaper of the day before yesterday put out a very fair challenge to the League, in a very beautiful article, in which it said we were called upon to argue the question upon that grounds; to show the justice, expediency and policy of our doctrine of 'immediate repeal.' I have no objection to answer that challenge; and in doing so if I am matter-of-fact and

dull, you must bear with me, and that patiently, because I shall be followed by those who can treat the subject with greater interest. Mark me, it is quite right, if I am to lay the basis of a matter-of-fact argument, that I should come first. I will be the heavy foundation-stone; and here behind me are the Corinthian capital and the gorgeous pedestal — the architectural beauties that are to grow upon this foundation. It is right too that we should have this kind of variety; because one of the boasts of the League is this, that we can find audiences such as could only be assembled in ancient Rome to witness the brutal conflicts of men, or that can now be found in Spain to witness the conflicts of animals; — we can assemble multitudes as great to listen to the dry disquisitions of political economy. That is our boast. Now to our argument.”

I withhold the argument, as I think the student should take only one step at a time. And he has not yet made sure of the first. This speech is worth reading throughout, as it is a very good example of the lucid arrangement of facts, topics, and arguments.

I do not know anything more likely to confuse and depress a beginner in oratory than to confront him with terms or rules which he can scarcely understand. Let him be exercised in that which he does know from his experience of ordinary conversation, and do not



ask him in the first instance to go much beyond the conversational method. Strictly speaking every part of a composition, spoken or written, comes under the head of rhetoric, of which I propose to treat in a separate chapter, but the student's attention should be concentrated upon the simple statement until he has made himself familiar with its scope and possibilities. The term exposition is generally applied to a statement which is concerned with a complicated subject, yet every statement is an exposition, and these terms may therefore be regarded as equivalent. The more complicated the subject, the greater the art required to make it clear in all its parts, and the simpler it appears when it has been stated, the greater is the eloquence and power of the speaker. A bare recital of facts may not suffice, even in the simplest cases. We sometimes require information as to time, and place, and circumstances, in order to appreciate the facts. Hence the necessity of description as an aid towards placing the facts in their proper light. We want to know not only what occurred, or what was said or done, but how it occurred, and how it was said or done. Our statement cannot, in such cases, be made clear without an exercise of the imagination, though we must be

careful, all the while, to keep the imagination in check lest we should be carried away from the concrete facts, which it is our purpose to illumine, and not to obscure. There is one great difference between the functions of the orator and the writer, which should never be lost sight of. The aim of the one is to make us think; of the other, to make us think and act. The spoken word calls for some action, or, at least, for some exercise of the will, on the part of those addressed, whereas the written word often leaves us quite passive. We may be amused, or instructed, or edified, by it, without doing anything. The spoken word, on the other hand, asks us to judge and decide and, sometimes, to act. Our chief object in reading is to enrich the mind; our purpose in listening to an orator is to discover not merely what is, but what ought to be. We listen to the preacher that we may learn to govern our conduct; to the advocate that we may return a true verdict; to the politician that we may give a righteous vote on the polling-day. We look to the orator, then, for light and leading, which are to bear fruit, beyond ourselves; and we can forgive him every defect but a want of lucidity, which would throw us back on our own resources, and create only doubt and con-

fusion, where we hoped for light and certainty. When facts are stated clearly, and in their proper order, they are said to possess logical sequence. That is to say, the statement is intrinsically logical, because the arrangement is in the natural order. There is no idea of argument implied. We find everything in the place which it ought to occupy, and we feel that it would be out of place if it were put anywhere else. And all this is within the reach of the young speaker, before he enters upon the study of logic, for the higher purposes of argumentation. This logical sequence is attainable only by the speaker who knows how to group his facts according to their bearing upon one another. Certain facts bear upon one aspect of the case, and they must be grouped there, and not suffered to obtrude themselves among others to which they are not directly related. Then again there are facts which come more appropriately at the beginning of a statement, and others, which are better reserved for the end. But the secret of order and sequence will discover itself to the novice in due time, if he will only make his aim lucidity and keep this resolutely in view. Having considered and utilised the foregoing hints, the student may now go a

step farther and suggest his own interpretation of the facts, and, although this will carry him somewhat beyond the elementary stage, he may attempt it without risk of failure. He may point out the moral of the facts he has recited, and call attention to the more striking conclusions which follow from them, and so, rounding off his simple statement, rest satisfied with his maiden speech.

The ancients who analysed the art of oratory with great minuteness, did not agree as to the number of parts of which a speech may be composed.<sup>1</sup> They appear to have confused the divisions of the art of oratory with those of a single speech and to have erred regarding both. Let us, however, for the moment, confine ourselves to the single speech. I know of no classification of parts that can be applied to speeches in general. I can enumerate the divisions of a speech when I have heard it, or read it, not before. The rules which are generally prescribed include as essential, an introduction and a peroration.<sup>2</sup> But I have heard some very good speeches which had neither the one nor the other. And a moment's reflection

<sup>1</sup> Quintilian, Book III.

<sup>2</sup> Aristotle says there are only two indispensable parts, the statement and the proof.

will convince anyone that there must be hundreds of such speeches delivered every day, wherever debate is carried on; and that scores of fallacies are demolished in circumstances in which the speaker has no time to make an introduction, and the audience would not listen to a peroration. Provide by all means for all imaginable divisions, if the subject is worthy of it—the introduction, the statement, the proof, the argument, and the peroration—for each of these divisions has its uses, and each is important in its place. But do not suppose that all are necessary before you open your mouth. And do not confuse yourself, thinking what part invention, memory, or judgment, has in the effort you are making. All these faculties, with the will and the imagination added, play their parts simultaneously. I think none of them ought to be classed as divisions of the speech. They are instruments of the process, but not parts of the product; and delivery, which is sometimes spoken of as one division of a speech, is really the speech itself in its final form, unless, indeed, the meaning of the word be restricted to the “acting” by which speaking is accompanied. Looking over the speech from which I have already quoted I see in it only three divisions—the in-

troduction, devoted to general topics, which the speaker wisely thought would please and interest his hearers, and prepare their minds for what was to follow; the argument, which forms the weightiest part of the whole; and the conclusion, which is a skilful appeal to their feelings, with a view to immediate action on their part, in support of his cause. The novice, at least, may then be recommended to employ the fewest and simplest divisions only, in his first efforts, while at the same time he is instructed in the meaning of all those of a most elaborate description, which every great speech usually embraces. He may ponder, though he cannot yet apply, the words which Cicero puts into the mouth of Crassus, in the Dialogues.—

“Since all the business and art of an orator is divided into five parts, he ought first to find out what he should say; next to arrange and dispose his matter, not only in a certain order, but with a sort of power and judgment; then to clothe and deck his thoughts with language; then to secure them in his memory; and lastly, to deliver them with dignity and grace. I had learned and understood also, that before we enter upon the main subject, the minds of the audience should be conciliated by an exordium; next, that the case should be clearly stated; then that the point

in controversy should be established; then that what we may maintain should be supported by proof, and that whatever was said on the other side should be refuted; and that, in the conclusion of our speech, whatever was in our favour should be amplified and enforced, and whatever made for our adversaries should be weakened and invalidated."

It may be asked why the student is allowed to engage in public speaking before he has learned any of the rules of rhetoric or of logic; and my answer is that it is well to encourage his natural freedom of speech and to impress upon him, and make him feel, at the outset, that oratory is not dependent upon rules. Every intelligent boy now living, has been speaking all his life—without rule, from necessity; and by the force of daily habit and the influence exerted upon him by his associates, he has acquired a considerable vocabulary, and a certain degree of eloquence, quite unconsciously. I wish to see him use these powers, immature though they be, to the extent of which they are capable; and I have no doubt that they are equal, under a reasonable amount of practice, to the delivery of a plain statement of facts. I am convinced that his capacity for clearness of statement, such as it is, would be weakened by any encouragement

he might now receive to enter upon the higher fields of oratory; that he must be restricted to what is conversational, so to speak, in order that he may be grounded, once for all, in an essential, but not attractive, part of the orator's art. If a boy is to be taught a foreign language, he must be taught through a medium of his native speech. It would be folly to cut him off suddenly from those forms of expression which he has acquired, as it were, by nature. The young orator, in like manner, must be exercised in the ordinary speech which he already employs, to make known his personal wants and desires, if in his first efforts, he is to lay the foundation of his further progress, and ultimate distinction.

✓ Oratory may be defined as the art of persuasion, and its legitimate purpose, as I view it, is twofold—it is to establish truth, and to stimulate men to righteous action.

There can be sound reasoning without a full and accurate perception of all the leading facts of any subject under discussion, yet the rarest form of mental power is the power of seeing facts. It is rare, because it implies both moral and intellectual capacity. A man may be a perfect master of words and phrases, a skilled dialectician, with a brilliant wit and the most



refined subtlety; he may be gifted with the divine faculty of imagination, and be able to take the highest flights of fancy, and yet deficient in the perception of some plain, ordinary, stubborn fact. Simply because he is the victim of his own prejudices. Prejudices of race, of denomination, or nationality, of politics, of training, of association, and of professional habit, are constantly forcing men into diametrically opposite views of the same state of facts; and I need hardly add that the prejudice of a perverted self-interest is responsible for many of the grossest errors of the human mind. One may therefore judge of a speaker's mental and moral character by his attitude towards the facts of his case. If he fails to see them as they are, or, seeing them, fails to state them with honest candour, we are forced to distrust his whole argument and refuse to be guided by his judgment.

## CHAPTER III

### THE USES OF RHETORIC

**T**HE resources of rhetoric are natural resources, and rules for composition are only records intended for the guidance of those who have not discovered the originals for themselves. The first public speakers had no rules, and no experience to draw upon but their own. In course of time their speeches came to be reported, and the secret of their eloquence disclosed itself. The speeches were analysed and found to derive their beauty, or force, or power of moving the hearts of men, from certain qualities of self-expression, which are possessed in some degree by all men, and which others, who are preternaturally gifted, enjoy to the fullest extent. After analysis came selection. All the qualities of the orator were observed; the highest and best were chosen and combined, and erected into an art which was named rhetoric. This art was designed as an aid to speakers and writers, and not as a means of fettering their natural liberty. At each stage of his progress, therefore,

let the student try what he can do by himself, even before he consults the masters of theory. He has invention of his own, for design; memory, for the reproduction of facts; imagination, for the description of places and circumstances; passions which, on every subject that touches him deeply, burn for utterance. Let him give all the faculties of mind and body that are called into play in speaking free scope. When he has done this, in repeated exercises, he will know the limitations of his own abilities, and be better prepared to profit by the counsels of others. When, as suggested in the last chapter, he has become proficient in stating the facts of any subject, he will aspire to higher efforts. He will feel that a bare statement of facts, however interesting it may be to those who are specially concerned in the subject treated of, and although in certain instances, nothing more would be appropriate, is not effective, as oratory, in great causes. When mighty issues depend upon the decision to which a speaker appeals he is himself profoundly moved. He becomes, in fact, rhetorical; and if we observe all that he says and does, in these supreme moments of advocacy, we may gather from him the whole science of rhetoric, which, it is said,

began and ended with Aristotle, because Aristotle was the greatest observer, and the most scientific report of that which he observed. The student of oratory should never miss an opportunity of hearing the great speakers, at the Bar, in the church, and at the political meeting. If he were diligent in his attendance upon them, and took pains to note down their characteristics, he would learn much, independently of any other instruction. But the perceptions of the young are not acute. They can record only what they have been able to see; and, in matters of art, the power of true and full perception depends upon a refined taste, and a mature judgment. It is, therefore, necessary for them to supplement their own observations by those of others, who have had a wider experience, and whose conclusions have been derived from a greater number of examples. The object of rhetoric is persuasion. When the speaker knows what his subject is, and knows also the character of the audience before which he is to speak, and the occasion of his speech, he knows what means of persuasion are at his disposal. The means of persuasion vary with the subject, the audience, and the occasion; and it depends upon the speaker to choose the best means in

each particular case. No rule that could be framed would apply to all conceivable cases. Wherever there is controversy, as in Parliament, in deliberative councils of all sorts, and in courts of law, the means of persuasion vary frequently during the progress of discussion. What it would be well to say at one stage, might be fatal at another. A great debate is like a battle, in which opposing generals exert all their skill and ingenuity to overcome one another. Generals are obliged to change their tactics, according to the fortune of the day, no matter what their original plans may have been, and a speaker, who has to face an adversary, in the war of words, is subject to the same necessity. The soldier, however, who has won can generally make sure of the fruits of victory, whereas the speaker, who has made the best case in the field of argument, is often beaten by a hostile judgment, or overwhelmed by the adverse vote of a party majority. Notwithstanding the infinite variety of subjects and cases it is nevertheless true that there are certain fixed principles of persuasion which cannot be dispensed with.

Audiences are persuaded, Aristotle tells us, in one of three ways, "either by their conception of the character of the speaker, or by the

success of his appeal to their emotions, or by what the facts demonstrate"; and sometimes, it may be added, by the partial or complete union of all these. It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of personal influence in forming the opinions of men, in legislatures, popular assemblies, and religious organisations. It is in some cases so persuasive as to be able to persuade almost without words, certainly without any display of what is called eloquence. The character of the speaker stands for affirmation, facts, and arguments. It inspires a confidence so unshaken, that even when good policy would seem to point infallibly in a direction opposite to that which he recommends, the audience feel that, after all, he must in some way be right, and they are accordingly persuaded to range themselves on his side. In the political arena it commands unquestioning assent to one set of doctrines one day, and to a contrary set on another. It not only secures assent, it inspires devotion. The history of religious beliefs, in all ages of the world, teems with evidence of its power. If the speaker finds it advisable to appeal to the emotions of his audience, as he often will in addressing popular assemblies, he has a wide field for the selection of his topics. No musi-

cal instrument that ever was devised is so variously susceptible as the human heart. Its moods are innumerable, and range in expression through all the notes of passion and feeling, by which we are roused to action or lulled to repose; by which we are stirred to joy or sorrow, to love or hatred, to fear or confidence, to admiration or contempt, to approval or indignation, to emulation or envy, to pride, anger, shame, pity, or remorse, to acts of mean selfishness or deeds of heroic benevolence. Some speakers excel in readiness and repartee; some in the exposition of an intricate case, or in a closely-reasoned argument; others, again, are distinguished by their powers of invective, or of sarcasm; one is a master of epithet, another is formidable in satire, another dazzles his hearers by his wit, or subdues them by his pathos, or dissolves them by his humour; but the true orator is he who takes sovereign possession of his audience by the sheer force of his own personality. The difference between good speaking and bad speaking is very often this: a good speaker gives you himself, the best of himself; a bad speaker gives you something not himself, which is lacking in natural force because it has only been put on for the occasion. The great orator impresses his au-

dience, first of all by his own personality; and the appropriate domain for its exercise is to be found in the affections and emotions of mankind. In the minds of some persons, however, to be impassioned on any subject is to be rude; to be indignant is to be unfashionable; yet there are cases where it is a duty to be angry, and passion is as necessary to oratory as imagination is to poetry, or as the light of heaven is to the splendours of a summer's day. For my part I do not understand how a public speaker can pronounce words which signify great sentiments in cold blood—such words as liberty, humanity, religion, war, peace. Each one of them suggests deathless memories. The names of those whose exploits shine upon the roll of honour rise above their sleeping dust; and we think not least of those who went down in honourable defeat, those whom the nations mourn because they knew how to die. Great emotions are not aroused by argument or by scientific demonstration. They have their sources in the hearts and souls and consciences of men, and are kindled only by sympathy. It is not the wand of science, but the one touch of nature that makes the whole world kin. When Sheridan pleaded the cause of humanity in the case



of the princes and peoples of India, Pitt moved the adjournment of the House expressly in order that it might recover from the overwhelming effect of the eloquence of the orator. The House accordingly adjourned. The speech was delivered in the House of Commons in connection with the proceedings about to be instituted for the impeachment of Warren Hastings. Burke, Pitt, and Fox united in describing it as the greatest ever uttered. It possessed the great qualities of the noblest style; but its supreme excellence lay in the moral ascendancy of the advocate of justice, in the righteous indignation of the accuser of oppression. Sheridan suspended the sitting of the House of Commons by an irresistible appeal to its humanity; and he touched its humanity by revealing and manifesting his own.

The manner in which a speaker addresses himself to the emotions of his audience will determine their disposition towards him, and if his subject be one which does not admit of any other appeal to them, a slight rhetorical mistake may make all the difference between success and failure. It is then a fixed principle in persuasion that the speaker must carry with him the sympathies of his audience. If,

again, he can rely neither upon the impression of his character, nor upon the emotions which he is able to excite, he must persuade by means of the facts, and by argument, which is nothing more than the presentation of the facts, in a demonstrative form. The student, instead of puzzling himself with theories and distinctions culled from authorities ancient or modern, should concentrate his attention upon the living art of oratory, as we know it, in the Senate, on the platform, at the Bar, in the pulpit, and in the lecture-hall. This is something which he can study for himself at first hand, and he will learn much from the mistakes of bad or indifferent speakers, as well as from the perfect art of good ones, because he will observe the effect produced on the audience by their different methods. What is called a rhetorical discourse, at the present day, is one which is addressed mainly to the feelings of the audience. Rhetoric with us has not the same signification it had among the Ancients. As applied to oratory, certainly, it has a narrower meaning, for it is no longer held to include the whole art of speaking. With regard to oratory in national assemblies, such as the British Parliament, or the United States Congress: nothing has so much influ-

ence in determining its character as the party system of Government. There are two parties in the House of Commons who alternately govern through a parliamentary majority. On most if not all important questions of national policy they are opposed to one another, and it may be stated as a rule that the apprehension of attack from a foreign enemy alone causes any cessation of parliamentary strife. The contestants besides having different public ends in view, are rivals for place and power. The questions that come before the House of Commons are consequently disputed questions. The House, although mainly composed of persons of wealth and education, is an assembly of great popular characteristics, and it is dependent upon a large popular vote in the country. Hence it follows that its oratory is addressed to the passions and sentiments of the people, though rising occasionally to the more complex strains of ethical and intellectual eloquence. The appeal to popular feeling is more or less disguised, according to the temperament of the orator, but it is there nevertheless, and is intended as much for the electors in the country as for their representatives to whom it is ostensibly addressed.

Parliamentary oratory being then, essen-

tially controversial, must be studied by those who aim at proficiency in debate. At the moment, however, we are concerned only with its rhetorical aspects, and the highest forms of rhetoric are those which find expression in figurative language. A proposition put in simple liberal terms will often fail to make any impression, whereas if it be expressed figuratively it will at once arrest attention and be repeated again and again. If a speaker wants to show that a party has accomplished nothing in the way of legislation, he may say that it has failed to pass any of its measures through Parliament, and thus bring out the simple fact; but if he says that the party has been "ploughing the sands," he gives an idea of the futility of its efforts which enters the mind like a flash of light, because the figure of speech is so eminently appropriate. This figurative language is often used by public speakers as a convenient summary of a long argument. Not content with proving a certain proposition argumentatively they seek for some striking figure which will fix it in the popular mind, and without which perhaps the logical demonstration would miss its mark. Popular eloquence is addressed to the fancy and the imagination of men as well as to their

passions and prejudices, and great effects are produced by the judicious use of metaphorical language. In a legislative assembly, where strong feeling is frequently aroused, in the discussion of national questions, the figure of hyperbole is in constant use. A speaker in the heat of argument will magnify or minimise an object, in the most daring manner, but there is no deception in his words because we perceive the object in its true proportions, and we not only make allowance for the imaginative description but are pleased with its audacity. We welcome a happy simile or comparison, for the same reason. The rules of debate enforced in legislative assemblies exercise an important and, on the whole, a beneficial effect on parliamentary rhetoric. They prevent its degenerating into coarse invective or vulgar abuse, and help to concentrate attention on the question under discussion. Mere personal attacks are objectionable, not only because they lower the tone of public life, but because they are irrelevant, and solve nothing. If the freedom of the platform is restricted in the senate, something is obtained in exchange. There is at least a saving of time and of temper, and there is no great loss of power. The thrust of a rapier is more deadly than the

blow of a blackthorn-stick. Hence it is that irony, and all forms of satire, are frequently employed in the senate. Censure sarcastically administered in terms of praise will sometimes overwhelm an antagonist who is proof against all other forms of attack. There are many examples of this species of rhetoric in the parliamentary speeches of Mr. Disraeli. He disposes of one of his critics by assuring him that he always listened to him with interest and pleasure and that he regarded him as a "superior person." Mr. Bright, who was equally eloquent at mass meetings and in Parliament, would not, on the platform, hesitate to stigmatise a certain opponent as an office-seeker. But when he wanted to do the same thing in the House of Commons he contrived an ingenious parody on some lines in Gray's *Elegy*, and repeated his version thus:—

For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,  
The pleasing sweets of office e'er resigned,  
Left the warm precincts of the Treasury,  
Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind.

The oratory of the platform and the public meeting, though possessing great affinity with that of the legislature, as it is conversant with the same class of questions, is distinguished by

greater freedom and a more rhetorical style. The pressure of public business which must be got through, with or without debate, in the legislature of to-day, checks the flow of words. Parliaments are legislative workshops, not debating societies; and even the old custom of ventilating grievances has had to give way to the demand for new laws dealing with the highly organised social and industrial life of the nation. The public meeting, on the other hand, is the fitting arena for abstract declamation, and for the agitation and discussion of questions not yet ripe for legislation. It is not in any sense a place for the transaction of business, but for the promulgation of public opinion and the expression of the sentiments and aspirations of the people. So much of the success of a speaker depends upon his appreciation of each occasion, as it presents itself, that the student cannot be too careful in noting the differences between one audience and another; and there is a wide difference between the public meeting and any deliberative assembly imaginable. An effective platform speaker displays an abundant and varied rhetoric, he avoids long arguments, and he is sparing of statistics. I am still of course using the term "rhetoric" in its

popular sense as distinct from the facts of a speech and the argument upon the facts. We have already seen how important it is that the facts should be well stated, and we shall consider, in a later chapter, the method of logical argumentation. In platform speaking the manner is of supreme importance. Before a popular audience a few facts and little argument will go a long way, if the manner of the speaker is calculated to engage the attention of his hearers. He need not, nay, he must not, be frivolous, and if he has a solid case to present, on a subject of genuine public interest, he will be heard patiently; but he must not be vague, or subtle, or equivocal, and above all, whether his speech is long or short he must not be tedious. The individuals of which a popular audience is composed are not accustomed to elaborate mental processes in the formation of their opinions, and consequently they are unable to bear the strain of a long and complex argument. I knew a distinguished member of the Bar who twice lost his seat in the House of Commons through his inability to address meetings of his constituents in a popular manner. He carried the tone and style in which he used to speak before a judge, sitting without a jury, to the meetings which were



largely composed of working-men, tired after their day's work—and so far from serving his cause he injured it at every meeting which he addressed. It was observed to me by one of his warmest supporters that so unconscious was he of any want of attention on the part of his audiences that he spoke to them at intolerable length, thereby aggravating the evil of a dry and spiritless elocution.

The platform speaker enjoys a greater latitude than any other in the choice of his topics, and in the methods of dealing with them. So long as he keeps on good terms with his audience he can take any line he likes. He is not restrained by the rules of Parliament, or the customs of the Bar, or the reverence of the Pulpit, or the necessity of imparting instruction which binds the school or university lecturer to a specific treatment of his subject. He may be grave or gay, lively or severe, as he wills, provided always that his varying mood is adapted to the matter in hand. A bold metaphor, a telling anecdote, a humorous allusion, a flash of wit, a stroke of satire, an outburst of invective, or a strain of touching pathos comes naturally to the man who is in possession of the popular ear, and who can respond to the heart-beating of his country-

men. And these are the instruments of platform rhetoric.

The Bar, except in political cases now happily rare, offers few opportunities for the display of rhetoric, in the restricted sense, in which for the sake of convenience, I use the word. In criminal cases no doubt a skilful advocate may capture the jury by an adroit appeal to their feelings; but such a triumph taxes all the resources of his art. He must in the first place know his men, and form his estimate of them as they enter the jury-box. He must determine accurately how they are likely to be affected by the particular case, and bear this in mind during its progress, especially in his treatment of the witnesses. A judicious question in cross-examination will often accomplish more for his purpose than the most fervid eloquence, so that it is not by oratory alone that an advocate wins his case but by its efficient conduct from beginning to end. It may be, however, that all his efforts in examination-in-chief, and in cross-examination, fail to weaken the case on the other side, and in these circumstances he must gird himself up for a powerful appeal to the jury. If he is Counsel for the prosecution, and there is the least room for doubt as to the guilt of

the accused, he may endeavour to remove it by reminding the jury of all that depends upon their verdict. Criminal cases generally relate to the security of life, or of property, or of both, and the jury cannot turn a deaf ear to any appeal founded upon them, for all men are concerned for the safety of human life and the security of their possessions. If for example the prisoner's offence be a breach of the peace, the prosecuting Counsel will emphasise the value of law and order, and suggest to the minds of the jury those general considerations regarding the importance of maintaining public tranquillity which never fail to impress the members of a law-abiding community. The rhetorical efforts of the Counsel for the defence on the other hand will be directed to other considerations not less true nor less vitally important in the abstract than those dwelt upon by his opponent. If it be true, as all admit, that law and order must be enforced, it is equally true that they could not be more disastrously violated than by the conviction and punishment of an innocent person. These appeals to general principles are not always relevant to the particular issues to be decided, and while their ostensible object is to put the jury in an equitable frame of mind,

their real purpose is to warp its judgment in the direction desired by the advocate. When a case is tried by a judge without a jury the forensic orator will discard everything in the form of rhetorical display, and rely upon his facts and the best reasoning upon them that the case will admit of. The learning and experience of the judge cannot usually be overcome by emotional eloquence; and even where the determination of the issues rests with the jury he has to be reckoned with. His summing up of the case gives him the last word before the jury enters upon the consideration of the verdict; and he will not hesitate to warn the jury if the zeal of the advocate on either side has betrayed him into any artifice prejudicial to a true decision. Irony as a purely rhetorical weapon is particularly effective, when addressed to a refined and cultivated audience; but it is a dangerous one to use in serious argument. A contributor to *Blackwood's Magazine* writing under the *nom de plume* of Sigma gives an instructive example of its injudicious use by an accomplished judge. Shortly after his appointment as a judge, he was trying a burglar in some country town, and by way of mitigating the tedium

of the proceedings, summed up something in the following fashion:

“ You will have observed, gentlemen, that the prosecuting counsel laid great stress on the enormity of the offence with which the prisoner is charged, but I think it is only due to the prisoner to point out that in proceeding about his enterprise he at all events displayed remarkable consideration for the inmates of the house. For instance, rather than disturb the owner, an invalid lady, as you will have remarked, with commendable solicitude he removed his boots, and went about in his stockings, notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather. Further, instead of rushing with heedless rapacity into the pantry, he carefully removed the coal-scuttle and any other obstacles, which, had he thoughtlessly collided with them, would have created a noise that must have aroused the jaded servants from their well-earned repose.”

After proceeding in this strain for some little time, he dismissed the jury to consider their verdict and was horrorstruck when, on their return into court, they pronounced the acquittal of the prisoner!

There are some fallacies, however, so baseless and fantastical that they cannot be treated seriously. They are beneath the dignity of weapons of precision, and are justly exposed

by a satirical description of their inconsequence and futility.

The oratory of the Bar, unlike that of the Senate, or the public meeting, is concerned with the rights and wrongs of individuals only, and not with great public affairs, and this circumstance obviously limits its opportunities for the more exciting and soul-stirring forms of eloquence. In listening to a real orator, whether he speaks in Parliament, or before a mass meeting, or in court, or in the pulpit, I always feel that, given the requisite knowledge and some familiarity with his surroundings, he would speak equally well in all places, though I know there are some notable instances to the contrary. The essential qualities of good speaking are always and everywhere the same. It is characterised by simplicity, lucidity, elegance, manliness and force; it is marked by unity of purpose, sound, coherent reasoning, happy illustration, and a hearty, outspoken delivery. The object of lectures in school or college is instruction, and how far the teacher can employ rhetorical methods depends upon the nature of his subject, as well as upon his own temperament and disposition. A lecture on some branch of political economy would differ in treatment from

one on literature or art, because of the limitations incidental to the subject, in the one case, and the variety and freedom permitted in the other; but in competent hands instruction, even of the most technical kind, can be made interesting if not entertaining. To this form of speaking, as to all other, the universal rule applies, that the speech must be adapted to the audience, and it makes a great difference whether the audience is composed of young students or old, and what particular sort of instruction the lecturer is trying to impart. It may be granted that it is not his function to amuse his pupils, and that his work as a teacher is very serious business; but that work will be all the more successful the more it is calculated to excite and sustain their attention. I do not know any form of public speaking in which good rhetoric and a good delivery would produce better results than that of the college lecturer who, while imparting sound knowledge, can also teach good methods by his own example. It is a mistake to suppose that great learning in the teacher is any compensation to the pupil for a mode of instruction which leaves no impression on his mind. There is a passage in the *Conferences of Lacordaire* which may serve for an example

of the rhetoric of the lecture hall. He was speaking in Notre Dame, on the divinity of Christ, and he wanted to quote two short sentences, one from Rousseau, and one from Napoleon. He determined that each of the precious fragments should have a rich and elaborate setting, and the effect of the whole is, I think, magnificent:

“Whilst the eighteenth century heaped insult upon the Son of God, in the very midst of that school which attacked Him, there was a man who believed no more than the rest, a man as celebrated as the rest — the most celebrated amongst them with one exception — and who above them all was privileged with sincere impulsions. God so willed it that His name might not be left without a witness even amongst those who laboured to destroy His reign. That man, then at the height of his glory, acquainted by his studies with past ages, and by his life, with the age of which he was an ornament, had to speak of Jesus Christ, in a profession of faith, in which he desired to sum up all the doubts and convictions which his meditations on religious matters had left in his mind. After having treated of God in a worthy, although in a confused manner, he came to the Gospel and Jesus Christ. There, that soul, floating between error and truth suddenly lost its hesitation, and with a hand firm as a martyr’s, forgetting his age and his works, the philosopher wrote the page of a theologian — a page



which was to become the counterpoise of the blasphemy: *Ecrasez l'infame!* It concluded by these words, which will resound throughout Christendom until the last coming of Christ. 'If the life and death of Socrates be those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus Christ are those of God.'"

Thus Lacordaire presented the quotation from Rousseau. Mark the still loftier diction of his introduction of the words of Napoleon:

"It might well have been thought that the force of that confession would never have been surpassed, whether in regard to the genius of the man who wrote it, the authority of his unbelief, the glory of his name, and the circumstances connected with the age which received it; but it would have been an error. Another man, another expression, another glory, another phase of unbelief, another age, another avowal, were greater altogether, if not in each separate part, then those you have just heard. Our age commenced by a man who outstripped all his contemporaries, and whom we, who have followed, have not equalled. A conqueror, a soldier, a founder of empire, his name and his ideas are still everywhere present. After having unconsciously accomplished the work of God, he disappeared, that work being done, and waned like a setting sun in the deep waters of the ocean. There, upon a barren rock, he loved to recall the events of his own life; and from himself going back to others who had lived before him, and to whom he had a right

to compare himself, he could not fail to perceive a form greater than his own upon that illustrious stage whereon he took his place. He often contemplated it; misfortune opens the soul to illuminations which in prosperity are unseen. That form constantly rose before him — he was compelled to judge it. One evening in the course of that long exile which expiated past faults and lighted up the road to the future, the fallen conqueror asked one of the few companions of his captivity if he could tell him what Jesus Christ really was. The soldier begged to be excused; he had been too busy during his sojourn in the world to think about that question. ‘What!’ sorrowfully replied the enquirer, ‘you have been baptised in the Catholic Church, and you cannot tell me, even here upon this rock which consumes us, what Jesus Christ was! Well, then, I will tell you’: and, opening the Gospel not with his hands, but from a heart filled by it, he compared Jesus Christ with himself and all the great characters of history; he developed the different characteristics which distinguished Jesus Christ from all mankind; and, after uttering a torrent of eloquence which no Father of the Church would have disclaimed, he ended with these words: ‘In fine, I know men, and I say that Jesus Christ was not a man!’ These words, gentlemen, sum up all I would say to you of the inner life of Jesus Christ, and express the conclusion which, sooner or later, every man arrives at who reads the Gospel with just attention. You who are yet young have life

before you; you will see learned men, sages, princes, and their ministers; you will witness elevations and ruins; sons of time, time will initiate you into the hidden things of man; and when you have learned them, when you know the measure of what is human, some day, perhaps, returning from those heights for which you hoped, you will say also, 'I know men, and I say that Jesus Christ was not a man!' The day too will come when upon the tomb of her great captain, France will grave these words, and they will shine there with more immortal lustre than the sun of the Pyramids and Austerlitz!"

Oratory though primarily a natural outburst of speech passes into the stage of art whenever the speaker's method is the result of deliberation and selection, whenever, in other words, he applies the resources of learning—be it the learning of the schools, or what he has been taught by his own experience—to the purpose of making his speech more effective. A shrewd peasant who sells his cow in the fair, or his pig in the market, at a good price, practises the art of persuasion. And the orator may learn from him that the language best suited to his purpose must be drawn from the school of life. Literature will furnish noble additions to his stock of ideas; but the expressive words of homely Saxon must be taken,

**breathing hot, from the lips of the people, in the field, the farm, the workshop, and the market-place.**

## CHAPTER IV

### LOGIC AND DEBATE

**L**OGIC, being the science of reasoning, and of the necessary laws of thought, may, in a sense, be regarded as the greatest of all sciences, for without some knowledge of its rules the human mind would be unequal to the comprehension of the phenomena with which the other sciences are concerned. No one could attain eminence in biology or sociology, for example, who was not a trained logician, for the conclusions of students in each of these sciences are often the result of inferences so delicate and subtle that the slightest flaw in a long chain of reasoning would vitiate the whole. What, again, would be our knowledge of astronomy without the science of reasoning, or our skill in mathematics by means of which the truths of astronomy are demonstrated? The more intricate and difficult the problem is, the greater must be the reasoning power applied to its solution. But for the management of the ordinary affairs of life, the logical faculty need

not be so highly developed as in purely scientific investigations. People of very limited education are able to reason correctly enough on matters affecting their own interests. They show acute perception, nice discernment, and sagacious judgment, in dealing with their own affairs; and there can, therefore, be no doubt that the reasoning faculty is naturally strong and that, from a very early age, we make use of it, consciously or unconsciously, in the determination of our simplest actions, as well as in regard to those which are more complex and more important. All that a knowledge of logic can do is to improve and strengthen this natural faculty, which all men possess in various degrees. If men as a rule are not good reasoners the fault does not wholly lie in the want of logical training. Neither is it due to the absence of natural gifts, but to the bias of party, for which a rigid logic, and a healthy moral courage, are the best antidotes. When facts are opposed to our wishes, or prepossessions, or certain principles which we have adopted and held for a long time, their recognition is deferred as long as possible, even in cases where we have surmounted the initial difficulty of taking them into consideration. In forming opinions

we need to be on our guard against our own prejudices; and we should keep an open mind in the progress of every investigation, so that our conclusions may be based, not on imperfect data, but on a complete view of all the facts and conditions of the question. This attitude of impartiality during the stage of examination and enquiry, is often more important to the seeker after truth than all the rules of the logicians, from Aristotle downwards. Once the enquirer has deliberately convinced himself, the more tenaciously he adheres to his opinion, and the more enthusiasm he infuses into the expression of it, the greater will be its effect upon others. His first care, however, must be to see that his opinion is well-founded, otherwise it will not stand any logical test, it will not secure acceptance from others, and, being easily refuted, it may only bring upon its author disappointment and defeat.

Logic treats of words, propositions, and arguments. Like every other science it has technical terms which have been designed to facilitate the student's work, and which he must learn as quickly as he can. Ambiguity in the use of a single word will alter the nature of a proposition and vitiate an argument.

When words are not used in the same sense throughout, the process of reasoning is abortive. The argument is simply nothing more than a confusion of irreconcilable notions without point or purpose. Great care must therefore be used in the structure of propositions so that no word may be employed ambiguously. A proposition may be defined as a form of words containing a subject and a predicate with a copula consisting of some part of the verb "to be," implying "is" or "is not." The subject is the thing spoken of; the predicate is that which is said, or predicated, of the subject; and the copula is so called because it is the link by which the subject and the predicate are connected. The expression "all men are mortal" is a proposition of which "all men" is the subject; the word "mortal" is the predicate, and the word "are" the copula. The most perfect form of an argument yet devised is the syllogism of Aristotle; and a syllogism consists of three propositions and only three: the major premise, and minor premise, and the conclusion. One argues syllogistically thus: All men must die: John is a man; therefore John must die. Nothing could be more clear or simple than this argument; and the student may be tempted to ask,



Is the syllogism then all that Aristotle has accomplished for the science or art of reasoning? The answer is that the syllogism is the final result of Aristotle's speculations upon the method of reasoning, and that the labours of all his successors, for two thousand three hundred years, have not yet discovered a better test of the soundness or unsoundness of an argument. The clearness, simplicity, and reasonableness of the foregoing syllogism arise from the fact that it is based on a truth of universal experience in the past history of the human race, the common mortality of men, concerning which there cannot be the slightest doubt in the mind of any one. The major premise, "all men must die," is at once admitted, and the minor premise, "John is a man," is equally indisputable, in fact, self-evident, and therefore the conclusion "John must die" is inevitable. It is easy to reason well concerning facts which are universally known, but when the facts are disputed, or obscured by various circumstances or considerations, as they often are, the task is one of much more difficulty; and it is here that the rules of logic help us to arrive at the truth. It should never be forgotten for a moment that in a syllogism the premises are always taken for granted.

If either premise is denied there can be no argument, and any attempted argument would be only a waste of words, yet it is very common to find people engaged in protracted disputes, which lead to no result, because they are not agreed, in the first instance, upon the premises. They are not disputing about the same thing. They are arguing on parallel lines which never touch each other; and so far as any possibility of logical agreement is concerned, they might go on forever without approaching it. There is sometimes a fundamental difference about a particular thing. When this is the case disputants should agree upon a definition. To define a thing is to specify those of its properties from which it derives its name and which mark it off from every other thing. The syllogism is the complete form of an argument, but it is seldom fully expressed in ordinary reasoning. One of the premises is often omitted, though always understood; and sometimes both may be left out, without danger of the conclusion being rejected. Where the truth of the premises is notorious they are assumed without being expressed. Taking the illustration already given, we may leave out the major premise and say, John is a man, therefore

John must die; or we may insert the major and omit the minor, and say, all men must die, therefore John must die; or we may omit both premises and confine ourselves to the statement of the conclusion, John must die. In this last case the syllogism is reduced to a mere assertion, which will not be disputed because the premises on which it is based are so well known. Let us suppose, however, that a person from another world descended upon our planet, and, being ignorant of man's mortality, denied the above conclusion, we should then be obliged to reconstruct the syllogism in its entirety in order to convince him, which we should do if he accepted our testimony as to the mortality of man.

Arguments are sometimes advanced which are so unconvincing that we hesitate to accept them, and at the same time so plausible that we are disinclined to reject them. In all such cases the way to solve our doubts is to put the argument in syllogistic form, and thereby ascertain whether the premises are such as we can accept as true, and whether the conclusion is legitimately deduced from the premises; in other words, whether the conclusion logically and naturally follows from the premises. We must not misunderstand the limits of logical

truth. It is not the same as absolute truth, for both premises and the conclusion drawn from them may be false in fact, and yet comply in every particular with the form of a good syllogism. In this case the reasoning is sound only so long as the premises are admitted to be true. If on further consideration of the matter we find that they are false, and reject them, the conclusion falls to the ground, and, unless premises which are true and adequate to its support present themselves, it cannot be re-established. The syllogism is simply an argument in which one proposition is inferred from two other propositions; but, as there are false syllogisms as well as true syllogisms, a debater should be able to distinguish the one from the other, and to explain to an audience why the first is false and the second is true. The true syllogism agrees with certain rules laid down by Aristotle. The false syllogism either violates these rules openly or, by a method more deceptive, complies with them in appearance only. As these pages are intended for those who have not gone through the course of logic as well as for some who have, I will state briefly the principal rules of the syllogism, which every orator should have firmly fixed in his memory.

The principle of the syllogism is that whatever is affirmed or denied universally of a whole class of things may be affirmed or denied of anything comprehended in that class. In the first place, a syllogism consists of three terms, and not more than three terms. In the syllogism  $X$  is  $Y$ ;  $Z$  is  $X$ ; therefore  $Z$  is  $Y$ , that which is taken as the subject of the conclusion,  $Z$ , is called the minor term; the predicate of the conclusion,  $Y$ , is called the major term, from its being usually of more extensive signification than the minor, of which it is predicated; and the term,  $X$ , which is used as the medium of proof between those two is thence called the middle term. The premise which contains the major term is called the major premise, and is generally placed first, though this order is not essential; and that which contains the minor term is called the minor premise. In these two premises the major term and minor term are each compared with the middle term, in order that in the conclusion one of them may be affirmed or denied of the other. Secondly, a syllogism consists, as we already know, of three propositions, and only three propositions, two of which are the major and minor premises, and the other one the conclusion. Thirdly, it is

requisite that in one or other of the premises, the middle term should be, according to the technical word, "distributed," that is, taken universally in its widest extent of possible meaning. For example, let us take two syllogisms in one of which the middle term is used in a universal sense, and is distributed; and one in which it is used in a particular sense only, and is undistributed, and we shall see that whereas the first is a sound argument, the second is no argument at all. Thus, corn is food; the contents of this bag is corn; therefore the contents of this bag is food. This is a true syllogism. But if I say, food is necessary to life; corn is food; therefore corn is necessary to life, I give expression to a false syllogism. The middle term of the first syllogism, corn, is used in an universal sense, though it is not prefixed by the word all; and the middle term of the second syllogism, food, is used in a particular sense only, though it is not prefixed by the restricting word, some. Failing to perceive when the middle term is used in a universal sense, and when it is used in a particular sense only, is a fruitful cause of false reasoning. Fourthly, no term must be distributed in the conclusion unless it was distributed in the premises, that is, if a term

is used in a restricted or particular sense in the premises we are not entitled to take it in an universal sense in the conclusion. If I say, Frenchmen are patriotic, the men of Rouen are Frenchmen, you cannot infer from these premises that the men of Rouen are patriotic, for I did not include all Frenchmen in my first proposition. Fifthly, from two negative premises nothing can be inferred. For example, bad vegetables are not good to eat; this vegetable is not bad; therefore this vegetable is good to eat. The syllogism is false, for this particular vegetable though not bad as a vegetable may be poisonous as a food. The sixth, and last of the principal rules, is that, if one premise be negative, the conclusion must be negative, and there cannot be a negative conclusion unless one of the premises be negative. The argument, all negroes are dark; no Englishmen are dark; therefore no Englishmen are negroes, illustrates the first part of the rule. The second part is too obvious to need illustration. You cannot deduce a negative from two affirmatives, as the student would find if he tried the experiment any number of times.

Every speaker should know the difference between deductive and inductive reasoning,

and the uses of these two methods. The examples already given, in illustration of the syllogism, are deductive, because in them we deduce or lead down the truth from premises to conclusion. In the deductive method something is known or assumed beforehand. From two facts forming part of our knowledge we infer a third fact which comes to us in the light of a discovery. We reason from a known general principle to an unknown particular fact. In the inductive method the process of reasoning is reversed, because there we gather the truth of general propositions, which we do not yet know, from particular facts which we do know. Both methods are employed in all scientific research, for when in pursuit of the inductive method, observation and experiment have put us in possession of particular facts, we cannot proceed to any generalisation without making an assumption, by way of testing results; we cannot get what is called a working hypothesis, and then reason upon it deductively to the conclusion sought. If the particular facts are true the hypothesis will be true, and not otherwise; and in this last case the hypothesis must be modified or the whole process may have to be repeated before we can be certain that anything has been added



to our knowledge. If there are several hypotheses we naturally select the one that seems to be supported by the greatest number of facts. Of course the facts must be weighed as well as counted, and if some one fact determines our judgment we decide by what is called a crucial instance. I need not repeat illustrations of deduction, and perhaps the best illustration of induction is what, in a criminal trial, is known as circumstantial evidence. In many criminal cases that come before the courts there is not a scrap of direct evidence. There is no witness of the crime to testify against the accused, but he is convicted nevertheless by the concurrent testimony of a number of little facts and circumstances the cumulative effect of which prove irresistibly the assumption of his guilt. A horse has been stolen which has been securely locked into its stable. The first thing the police may do when they arrive upon the scene of the theft is to note the situation of the stable, and the appearance of the stable door. They find, let us say, no marks whatever on the door; but they notice that the stable, if approached by anyone unconnected with the owner's establishment, could only be reached through a field, in which foot-marks are discovered.

They have arrested a man on suspicion for no other reason than that he was seen in the neighbourhood of the stable the day before the horse was stolen; and that, owing to a previous conviction, he is on their list of suspected persons. They find on comparing his boots with the foot-marks that both agree in size and shape. When the accused was arrested they noticed that one of his coat-sleeves was torn at the elbow, and that to prevent the torn part from dangling, he had tied it up with a piece of cord which, on being compared with a cord lying in the stable of the owner, was found to correspond with it, and from which it had evidently been severed. They also found on the prisoner a key fitting the lock of the stable door, and they emphasise the fact that whoever the thief was he must have opened the door with a key, for there were no marks indicating breakage upon it, which there would have been if it had been broken open. The accused is unable to account satisfactorily for the foot-marks, or for his possession of the piece of cord and the key of the stable door, and he is convicted. The hypothesis of his guilt is considered proved. But let us suppose that, while unable to deny any part of the circumstantial evidence brought against him,

he is really innocent, and has a good defence. As soon as the prosecution have finished their case against him, his counsel takes it up and proceeds to meet the particular facts adduced against him, with other particular facts, by which the former are, though fully admitted, completely nullified. He substitutes the hypothesis of the prisoner's innocence for that of his guilt. He shows in the first place that, although the prisoner's boots agree with the foot-marks in size and shape, there is one peculiar impression missing in those foot-marks which they must have received if they had been made by the boots of the prisoner. Both boots have, on the outside heel, a half tip, which stands well above the heel sole, the impression of which would be plainly visible if the foot-marks really belonged to the prisoner. The foot-marks are without this impression, and are perfectly smooth and level. As to the piece of cord he does not deny that it may be part of that belonging to the horse's owner, for he picked it up near the owner's house when he was passing it on the day his coat was torn. The fact of the key found on him fitting the stable door was a mere coincidence, for it was the key of the room which he occupied as a lodger in a respectable tenement

house, and had been given to him by his landlord when he took possession of the room. In this second imaginary case the accused is acquitted, for the assumption of his innocence is stronger than the assumption of his guilt. In both cases the inquiry into the guilt or innocence of the accused begins inductively, and proceeds until we have gathered facts upon which an assumption may be made. We then test this assumption deductively, and finally arrive at what appears to be the true conclusion.

Enough has been said to show how, given certain facts, the validity of a certain proposition or series of propositions can be proved. It remains to indicate certain fallacies, which are common in debate, and how they may be refuted. A fallacy may be briefly defined as a deceptive argument. When a fallacy is open and palpable, with nothing to support it but the audacity with which it has been put forward, it is easily disposed of; but most fallacies are of a more dangerous character. They may be wrapped up in vague and equivocal phraseology, embellished with seductive eloquence, or skilfully woven into the sentiments, passions, and prejudices of those to whom they are addressed. Very often the

author of a fallacy is himself at once the victim and the agent of his own sophistry. He begins by deceiving himself, and ends by deceiving others. The easiest, and I think, the best way to deal with a fallacious argument, or an argument whose validity, for one reason or another, we wish to test is to reduce it to its simplest terms. To strike out all redundant words, and everything not strictly relevant to the point to be proved. The dictate of common sense may then be sufficient to enable us to see its real character, and the ground of its inconclusiveness. If not we must bring it to the test of the deductive method, and ascertain how far it agrees with, or violates, the rules of the syllogism. In a fallacious argument the fault must lie either in the premises or in the conclusion. Sometimes the fallacy arises from the fact that the conclusion does not follow from the premises; sometimes it arises where though the conclusion does follow from the premises, it is irrelevant, something different from what was originally maintained, and what ought to have been proved. The fallacy in the first of these instances would be what is called a fallacy in form; that in the second would be what is called a fallacy in matter. With all the aid

that the syllogism affords as a test we may often find it difficult to judge whether a term has been used universally or particularly, and we are obliged to decide solely by the general drift of the discourse and our knowledge of the subject-matter. In the two propositions, man loves the chase, man is mortal, the form is the same, but the term man in the second proposition has a wider signification than it has in the first, for we know that while some men do not love the chase all men are mortal. Man is used in an universal sense in the second proposition, and in a particular sense in the first. If the signs of quantity, "some," and "all," were used in each case respectively we should be better able to grasp the sense intended, but we might lose in elegance and freedom of style what we gained in precision and formality. Then again we must remember that these little words in certain expressions are themselves ambiguous. The word, all, is sometimes understood as meaning all collectively, sometimes every one, separately. If we say, all the apples in the basket are worth a shilling, all taken together is meant; if we say, they are all ripe we mean that every one is ripe. Some, implies at one time, some definite one; as in the proposition, some food

is vegetable; at another time it means some one or another; as in the proposition, some food is necessary to life. But the ambiguities of words are almost infinite, several words standing for a great number of wholly different things; some words mean one thing in the language of science, and something quite different in ordinary conversation, so that the sense in which they are meant in any given case must be gathered from the subject, and the occasion of their delivery. The student who may be discouraged by the prospect of weary verbal quibbling, here suggested, will be reassured when I tell him that experience shows that, for all purposes of controversy, the speaker who has taken care to be well informed in all the essential facts of his subject, those on the side opposed to him, as well as those on his own side, will have in his possession the most effective means for proving his own case and refuting any fallacies he may have to meet. If, on the other hand, he has not mastered the facts he will be correspondingly weak in an encounter. I was a witness, in the House of Commons, of a striking illustration of the discomfiture which awaits reckless statements made in debate, which are not borne out by facts. A distinguished member

of the House, who some few years afterwards became its leader suggested that the House should not attach any weight to anything said by certain members, to whom he referred individually, because, as he alleged, those members when they spoke in their own part of the country could get no one to attend their meetings but non-electors. The three members whose representative character was thus impugned sat for large county constituencies. When the distinguished member sat down one of them rose and quietly asked him if he would explain to the House how it was that the members to whom he referred, who could induce only non-electors to attend their meetings, managed to persuade the electors in their constituencies to return them to the House. This was enough, and more than enough by way of defence, but the speaker proceeded to carry the war into the enemy's camp; he reminded the House that the franchise of the counties, as it stood at that time, was higher and more select than that of the boroughs, and that whereas he and his friends were elected for three large counties, their assailant represented only a very small borough with a lower and wider suffrage. And then followed a burst of indignant rhetoric in which the



distinguished member was reproached for the baseless assertions he had made. The slip was exposed before an amused House, in various aspects; and any effect which other portions of the distinguished member's speech might have produced was completely effaced by this triumphant reply.

✓ The fallacies which most frequently occur in debate may now be enumerated. The fallacy known as begging the question, *petitio principii*, occurs when we assume what we were bound to prove, when we make assertions going to the root of the matter in dispute without supporting them by evidence. This can only be refuted by showing the difference between assumption and proof. Another fallacy equally common is that of ignoring the question, *ignoratio eleuchi*. It happens when a speaker, who may be very voluble in dealing with minor points, passes over the essential facts which govern the question to be determined; and is best answered by recalling his attention to what these facts really are. Again, when there is a flaw in the argument from cause to effect we have the fallacy called, After the fact therefore on account of the fact, *post hoc ergo propter hoc*. In this fallacy it is assumed that because one event suc-

ceeds another it is the effect of that other. It is a very common fallacy in political and economic discussions. In refuting it we must show that sequence and result are not at all equivalent terms denoting identical facts, that the alleged operation of the preceding event as a cause of the succeeding one has not been shown. It may even be possible to transpose the relation of the two events and to show not only that the second has not been caused by the first but that it is itself the cause of the first, and ought to have been stated as preceding the event which it is said to have succeeded. When arguments are advanced that lead to admittedly absurd conclusions we have the fallacy known as "reduction to absurdity," *reductio ad absurdum*. To refute this we assume that the fallacious proposition is true, and then show to what absurdities it leads. This mode of refutation is familiar to all who have studied geometry. A speaker is said to be guilty of the fallacy called "the dilemma," when the position taken by him leads necessarily to either of two fallacious consequences. This fallacy is similar to the *reductio ad absurdum*; and the mode of refutation is similar, for you must assume the truth of the proposition containing the dilemma in order

to show the consequences which it involves. It seems that common practice entitles you, when you have pointed out to your opponent both horns of the dilemma to invite him, with sarcastic politeness, to choose the one on which he prefers to be impaled. As to the manner in which a disputant should present his arguments: he should always be courteous to his opponent, but without being in any way apologetic, for the tone of apology would indicate a want of confidence in his own arguments which whether he feels it or not, he ought not thus gratuitously to invite the audience to share. There is a world of philosophy in the advice of Polonius to his son: "To thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou can'st not then be false to any man." You must carefully consider the order of your arguments from the point of view of their relative strength. Although the exigencies of the actual dispute may cause you to modify this order in certain particulars you will find it advisable as a rule to present the weaker proofs in the earlier part of your address, and to reserve those which are strongest and most important for its close. If you want to ensure the success of your own case, you must convince your audience of the de-

fects in the arguments brought against it, as well as convincing them of the truth of the arguments in its favour. The presumption, as it is called, may be with your side, or with ✓ the other side. A presumption is that which may be logically assumed to be true until disproved, as in the legal maxim, "Every man is presumed to be innocent until he is proved guilty." If the presumption is on your side the burden of proof rests with your opponent; if, on the other hand, the presumption is against you, on you rests the burden of proof, that is, the obligation to establish by proofs a given proposition before being entitled to receive an answer from the other side. This is the rule of the courts; and though it is one which cannot be strictly enforced in the discussion of public questions, its propriety is obvious there also, for it is justly expected of those who propose any reversal of national policy that they should make out their case for the proposed change before asking others to state the grounds of their preference for ✓ things as they are. In replying to an opponent you need not answer everything he has said. Oftentimes much is said to which the only suitable attitude is absolute silence. But little things sometimes have great weight, and

the apparently trivial cannot always be safely ignored. In making admissions, you have to consider not only what is due to the other side, but also what must be the effect of them on your own case, and sometimes their effect may be much wider than you imagine. Statements which seem to establish your opponent's position must be met with tact and ingenuity, and all your most forcible arguments. An experienced debater will often be able to make almost as much use of the facts adduced by his opponent as of those which he had himself presented, and on which he chiefly relies. So much depends upon the point of view, and the interpretation which the facts will bear. The opponent may have considered them in a very restricted and one-sided way only, and in this case it may be possible to turn them against him with crushing effect. In like manner his illustrations may serve to point a stronger moral on your side than on his own, and if they are witty or humorous, a retort in kind will recoil with double force upon him. When you have to meet direct testimony to damaging facts it is your right and your duty to scrutinise the motives of the witness. He may be prejudiced. He may have a personal interest in proving something which you dis-

pute; and if you can show this you will raise a fair presumption against the weight of his evidence.

The rules of procedure in a legal action are well adapted to the sifting of evidence, and generally succeed in bringing out the truth. It would be well, considering the conflict of testimony in discussions of public questions, if similar rules could occasionally be applied to parliamentary debates. In legal arguments facts are proved on sworn testimony. There is first what is called examination-in-chief, when the facts are stated by the witness or witnesses on behalf of the plaintiff. There is then the cross-examination on the part of the defendant, by which the plaintiff's testimony may be greatly weakened if not destroyed; and then follows the re-examination with a view to the restoration of the original credit of the evidence in chief. The same process is gone through in the hearing of the defendant's case; and great as may be the skill and ability of counsel, it will be the fault of either judge or the jury, or of both, if the true facts are not elicited, and given due weight in the verdict. The great distinction between arguments of a legal character, and those relating to public affairs is, that the first are con-

cerned with individual rights, which are not only capable of exact definition, but which have been defined in the law of the land, whereas the second are concerned with questions affecting the community as a whole, which are undefined, and which every man is free to determine for himself according to his knowledge, his code of ethics, or his views of policy. The influence of authority in the formation of opinion is worthy of the fullest consideration by all who take part in the discussion of important subjects. The authority of a superior court is of great weight in an argument before an inferior one, and the dictum even of a single judge, if he be an eminent jurist, may be quoted with effect. But in disputes of a general character, in public assemblies, authorities may be arrayed against authorities, and it may be possible to show that one set of them is better than the other, with higher qualifications to pronounce upon the debated question. The argument, from authority is strong as a corroboration, and, in any case, it is usually heard with respect, and may therefore, as a rule, be safely employed though the occasions are few where, standing by itself, and in relation to matters outside the domains of law and theology, it would be de-

cisive. Reasoning from analogy is sometimes very effective. When things resemble each other in many properties we have a case of analogy. In the science of astronomy and geology much is discovered by analogy; and in considering questions of policy we are often reminded of the results produced by certain measures, in circumstances which are declared to be analogous to our own. However, as resemblances are frequently deceptive we must be careful not to push the argument from analogy too far. At best it can only be subsidiary like the argument *ad hominem*, or the *tu quoque* argument, or the argument from antecedent probability. The first of these is a personal argument, in which we are asked to act as a certain person would act if he were in our place. The second is one in which we are reminded that we ourselves have on a former occasion taken the course which we now oppose. And the third is one which relates to motive or opportunity, or some other circumstance, determining an act before its commission. It is also known as the argument *a priori*, in contradistinction to the argument *a posteriori* which is an inference drawn from something after the fact, as *a priori* is an assumption based upon something before the



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**fact. In the first case we argue from cause to effect: in the second, from effect to cause.**

## CHAPTER V

### DELIVERY

ONE of the greatest orators of the period which produced the largest number of great orators that ever appeared contemporaneously in Great Britain—the last quarter of the eighteenth century, and the opening years of the nineteenth—has left an amusing description of the confusion which awaited his first attempt at a speech. I allude to Mr. Curran. He made his first appearance, he tells us, before a debating society; and though he was well prepared, his self-possession deserted him when he had spoken only a few words, and notwithstanding encouraging cheers he could not proceed with his speech. Mr. Curran's experience is not altogether uncommon. It may be well, therefore, in approaching the important question of delivery, to consider at the outset, how an unpractised speaker loses his presence of mind, when he presents himself to an audience. The first requisites of a good delivery are nerve, and self-control. Without these the ablest speech

will lose much of its effect upon the most sympathetic audience. If a speaker is nervous his audience is disturbed, uncomfortable, and distrustful. And while they are in this condition, if they do not put the worst construction upon what he says, they generally fail to appreciate its force and significance. What then does nervousness in public speaking arise from, and how may it be diminished, if not wholly cured? The trepidation felt by a speaker who speaks in public for the first time is easily accounted for. Everything we try to do for the first time is more or less disappointing; and all beginnings, it has been often said, are weak. The man who essays his maiden speech does something which to him is entirely novel. He performs an experiment upon himself, and by the necessity of the case he must perform it in the presence of others, who are interested witnesses, sharers in it themselves, and who constitute a body of living testimony as to the degree of success or failure with which it is attended. It is the fact of the audience looking on that makes the maiden effort of a speaker more difficult than other maiden efforts. Learning to speak in public is like learning to swim, or to skate, or to ride a bicycle, in this sense at least, that no amount

of previous theoretical instruction will enable one to realise the initial difficulties, or find out how to overcome them, without actual experiment. But one may learn any of these exercises in private, without encountering the public gaze. The speaker has not this advantage, yet the oftener he speaks the greater will be his self-confidence, and he will find eventually that the exercise which cost him so much trouble in the beginning is one that may be done with ease and even some pleasure and enjoyment. The comparison of the learner in swimming is, however, just and instructive so far as it goes. As a boy first venturing to swim chooses shallow water, the young speaker should, in his earliest efforts, be content with a small audience. I suggested in the second chapter that he might learn the art of simple narration by recounting in the domestic circle some of his daily experiences. In the same manner he might acquire the habit of self-confidence before facing a public audience. Then, again, there is the debating society, a good exercise ground, available not only in school and college, but in all large centres of population, where boys of maturer years may essay their first flights in oratory. It is not the novice only who suffers from nervousness.

This oratorical malady is one which pursues some speakers all their lives. It may be either physical or mental in its origin. There is no form of intellectual exercise which requires so great a reserve of physical energy as public speaking. Many speakers overlook this fact, and often find themselves at the assembly or the public meeting, when they are in indifferent health, and unfit for the task which they have undertaken, or which has been thrust upon them. In these cases it is not wonderful that they should feel nervous, and that they should attribute their nervousness to the wrong cause, to some petty incident, occurring before or during the meeting, which at another time would make not the least impression upon them. It seems to me then that the orator needs physical as well as mental training. He ought to have plenty of open air exercise, with the plain living which Wordsworth associates with high thinking, in order that he may enjoy sound health, and possess a fund of animal spirits to sustain him through any ordeal he may have to face. Physical exercise would also be useful as a means of imparting ease of movement to a speaker, and of preventing that awkward action which in certain cases detracts so much from good oratorical effect.

What I mean by mental nervousness, if it be not unscientific to draw a distinction between mental and physical in this matter, is that which arises from some affection of the mind, and by which speakers are sometimes attacked, independently of any known physical cause. It is probably safe to assert that no orator ever lived who did not suffer from this form of nervousness at some time or other. One feels that it must be so from the fact that oratory is an art. The artist cannot help being anxious for the success of his work. His anxiety, though it be but temporary, is one of the conditions of his achievement. Yet in the gradual realisation of his ideal his anxiety diminishes, and with every difficulty overcome there is an added ground of contentment, until the end crowns all, and the sense of triumph has obliterated every other feeling. The recollection of past achievement is the best antidote to artistic nervousness. The occasional nervousness of great orators, of which we have abundant testimony, is not to be attributed to any sense of personal danger. It arises from two desires, both of which are praiseworthy, the desire of artistic success, and the desire of moral success. Having indicated the influence exercised by the first of these, let me say

a word on the second and the greater one. Every speaker who believes in his cause naturally desires its success, and this desire begets anxiety which will sometimes betray itself in nervousness. A speaker feels a deep sense of responsibility in pleading a great and noble cause, be it the defence of an innocent person, the impeachment of an oppressor, the vindication of a national right, or the assertion of some lofty principle, because his ability and eloquence, however powerful, are less in his own estimation than the merits of the cause, and less than his desire to serve it. It is true he may also feel his responsibility, without loss of nerve, and by keeping his thoughts concentrated on the more hopeful aspects of his task, dispel the doubts and fears which obtrude themselves; but he will often be unable to achieve this state of mind before speaking, and it is while he is getting ready for the first plunge that the nervous fit comes on. The only remedy for this form of nervousness which experience has suggested is that given to the bather who in his first attempt at swimming stands trembling on the edge of the water; the speaker must take a "header" into his subject, and make himself instantly at home with his audience. Mr. Gladstone on

being asked by Lord Coleridge if he had ever felt nervous in public speaking, answered, "In opening a subject, often; in reply, never." Anyone who was acquainted with Mr. Gladstone's temperament would be prepared for the second part of his answer, for great as were his intellect and eloquence, his moral courage was equal to both; and in reply the whole massive strength of his combative nature was aroused to its highest capability. A brave man, with the divine gift of speech, whose duty it is to repel an attack on himself, or his cause, has no time to be nervous. He may be eager and even impatient; but the only thing which could affect his nerves, would be some tyrannical order depriving him of the opportunity for which he pants, and upon the right and fearless use of which his thoughts are exclusively bestowed. Without pursuing this topic, it may now be affirmed that a good nerve is essential to a good delivery. At the same time self-confidence need not be pushed to the point of presumption. A speaker should not be wanting in a becoming respect for his audience, who are entitled in their collective capacity to the same courtesy which he would be ready to extend to each of them individually. Certainly the beginning of a speech should be



deferential to those to whom it is addressed if the speaker hopes to make them think as he thinks. He must engage their favourable attention before he can persuade them of the truth of his doctrines.

I need not repeat here, what I have already urged in the introductory chapter, that the practice of reading aloud ought to be diligently cultivated as an aid to the management of the voice in delivery. A skilled elocutionist would be able to suggest other exercises useful for the same purpose; but I do not know that he could recommend anything which is easier, or more convenient, especially for young boys and girls still at school. Since they must all learn to read, it is a pity if their teachers do not give them the extra attention necessary to make them read well. The power of speech which enables human beings to communicate with one another raises them to an immeasurable height above all other animals, and no time is wasted which is devoted to its improvement. Speech is the utterance of which voice is only the medium, but if the medium be defective whatever emanates from it will be defective in like proportion. If Demosthenes, the orator whose name has been synonymous with eloquence for twenty-three centuries, did not

grudge the labour he expended on the culture of voice and speech, the student of oratory, to whom these pages are addressed, must not hesitate to engage if necessary in similar exercises. Plutarch, who wrote his immortal "Lives" in the first century of the Christian era, records the diligence shown by Demosthenes in the early stages of his oratorical education; and the story which has been so often quoted will bear quotation again and again for the student's instruction.

"In his first address to the people [says Plutarch] he was laughed at and interrupted by their clamours, for the violence of his manner threw him into a confusion of periods, and a distortion of his argument. Besides he had a weakness and a stammering in his voice, and a want of breath, which caused such a distraction in his discourse, that it was difficult for the audience to understand him. At last upon his quitting the assembly, Ennomus, the Thracian, a man now extremely old, found him wandering in a dejected condition in the Pireus, and took upon him to set him right. 'You,' said he, 'have a manner of speaking like that of Pericles, and yet you lose yourself out of mere timidity and cowardice. You neither bear up against the tumults of a popular assembly, nor prepare your body by exercise for the labour of the rostrum, but suffer your parts to wither away by negligence and indolence.' Another time we are told,

that when his speeches had been ill received, and he was going home with his head covered, and in the greatest distress, Satyrus, the player, who was an acquaintance of his, followed and went in with him. Demosthenes lamented to him that, though he was the most laborious of all the orators, and had almost sacrificed his health to that application, yet he could gain no favour with the people; but drunken seamen and other unlettered persons were heard, and kept the rostrum, while he was entirely disregarded. 'You say true,' answered Satyrus; 'but I will soon provide a remedy, if you will repeat to me some speech in Euripides or Sophocles.' When Demosthenes had done, Satyrus pronounced the same speech, and he did it with such propriety of action, and so much in character, that it appeared to the orator quite a different passage. He now understood so well how much grace and dignity action lends to the best oration, that he thought it a small matter to premeditate and compose, if the pronunciation and propriety of gesture were not also attended to. Upon this he built himself a subterranean study, which remained to our times. Thither he repaired every day to form his action and exercise his voice; and he would often stay there for two or three months together. . . . When he did go out upon a visit or received one, he would take something that passed in conversation, some business or fact that was reported to him, for a subject to exercise himself upon. As soon as he had parted from his friends, he went to his study, where he repeated the

matter, in order as it passed, together with the arguments for and against it. The substance of the speeches which he heard he committed to memory and afterwards reduced them to regular sentences and periods. . . . As for his personal defects, Demetrius the Phalerian gives us an account of the remedies he applied to them: and he says he had it from Demosthenes in his old age. The hesitation and stammering of his tongue he corrected by practising to speak with pebbles in his mouth; and he strengthened his voice by running or walking up hill, while pronouncing some passage in an oration or a poem."

Whether all cases of stammering can be cured, and the voice strengthened, by the remedies which, according to Plutarch, proved successful in the case of Demosthenes, I know not; but the example of self-instruction and self-discipline which the story of his early efforts affords ought to be helpful to all students of oratory. The careful student will note the methods of composition described in the foregoing extracts; and particularly how Demosthenes improved his delivery by reading from the Greek dramatists, in the presence, and under the correction of the actor, Satyrus. Cicero, too, sought instruction from the players of both the comic and the tragic stage. The young

orator of to-day cannot do better than avail himself, whenever possible, of similar assistance. The elocution of our great actors illustrates, in the most brilliant form, the effectiveness of an accomplished delivery. Cicero insisted, as strongly as Demosthenes had done before him, upon the importance of delivery in public speaking, as we see in a passage of *De Oratore* in which he quotes Demosthenes.

“ Delivery, I say, has the sole and supreme power in oratory; without it a speaker of the highest mental capacity can be held in no esteem, while one of moderate abilities, with this qualification, may surpass even those of the highest talent. To this Demosthenes is said to have assigned the first place, when he was asked what was the chief requisite in eloquence; to this the second, and to this the third. For this reason I am wont the more to admire what was said by *Æschines*, who, when he had retired from Athens on account of the disgrace of having lost his cause, and betaken himself to Rhodes, is reported to have read, at the entreaty of the Rhodians, that excellent oration which he had spoken against Ctesiphon, in opposition to Demosthenes; and when he had concluded it, he was asked to read next day that also which had been published by Demosthenes on the other side in favour of Ctesiphon; and when he had read this too in a most pleasing and powerful tone of voice, and all expressed

their admiration, *How much more would you have admired it, said he, if you had heard him deliver it himself!* ”

I cannot withhold another condensed extract from the same illustrious authority on eloquence, in which he shows how the different tones of the voice are adapted to the expression of every variety of passion.

“ Every emotion of the mind has from nature its own peculiar look, tone, and gesture ; the whole frame of a man, and his whole countenance and the variations of his voice sound like strings in a musical instrument, just as they are moved by the affections of the mind. For the tones of the voice, like musical chords, are so wound up as to be responsive to every touch ; sharp, flat, quick, slow, loud, gentle ; and yet among all these each in its kind has its own middle tone. From these tones too are derived many other sorts, as the rough, the smooth, the concentrated, the broad, the protracted and interrupted ; the broken and divided, the attenuated and inflated, with varieties of modulation ; for there is none of these, or those that resemble them, which may not be influenced by art and management ; and they are presented to the orator, as colours to the painter, to produce variety. Anger, for instance, assumes a particular tone of voice, acute, vehement and with frequent breaks ; but lamentation assumes another tone, flexible, full, interrupted. Fear has another tone,

desponding, hesitating, abject; violence another, strained, vehement, impetuous, with a kind of forcible excitement; pleasure another, unconstrained, mild, tender, cheerful, languid; and trouble has another tone, a sort of gravity without lamentation, oppressed as it were with one heavy uniform sound."

In conversation these tones occur naturally in their order according to the nature of the subject and the emotion experienced and what the public speaker must try to do is, to carry into the meeting which he addresses the same naturalness, the same unconstrained spontaneity of utterance. Earnestness is an aid to propriety of expression, when it does not pass the bounds of self-control. It produces that variety of inflection, which is necessary to make a long discussion tolerable, if not agreeable to the audience. Its obviously great persuasive force need not be urged. A monotonous delivery is fatal to oratorical effect, if for no other reason than that it wearies the listeners. I have heard able speeches, which read very well in print, delivered so monotonously that it required the utmost stretch of patience to listen to them. There is really no excuse in the great majority of cases for defects of this kind. It is not a question of the unequal distribution of natural gifts, but of

the cultivation of the common gift of speech, by exercises of the simplest description. Those persons alone who have no ear for rhythm can be excused for monotonous delivery; but the defective ear, as every skilled musician knows, is not absolutely incurable.

The voice, as we have already seen, has three keys—the high, the low, and the middle. In speaking, the high key denotes excitement, in some of its different forms, and when unduly prolonged it is the result of an unregulated eagerness on the part of the speaker. When this is the case it mars distinctness of words and phrases, thereby obscuring, if not wholly destroying, the meaning of what is said. Persistence in the high key is a defect, which, as it arises from natural feeling, is to be specially guarded against. A remedy must be sought in the constant recollection of its injurious effect upon the discourse. To see an eloquent speaker carried away with his subject in a burst of genuine enthusiasm is a fine sight. The human reality of it is particularly stimulating; but if he should lose control of his voice, as well as of his emotions, and become inaudible, the aroused expectation of the audience would suffer an unpleasant disappointment. The low key is a vehicle of sorrow,



caution, distrust, or solemnity, and is not usually attended with the hazard that waits upon the high key. A speaker has more control over himself when he speaks in a subdued tone, and he is assisted then by the quickened attention of the audience. But it must not be forgotten that deep pathos is sometimes as fatal to audibility as strong excitement, that in short the speaker must learn from his own practice, and his observation of other speakers, how the emotions may be at the same time prudently controlled, and yet adequately expressed. The middle key, which is the voice of ordinary conversation, is the most suitable for oratory. It is easily adapted to the expression of every fluctuation of passion; it enables the speaker to ascend to the higher, or descend to the lower, without difficulty; it can be sustained without much exertion throughout a long address; and it imposes no strain upon the listeners. Mr. Bright, who had a rich, musical voice, spoke in the tone of friendly conversation, but no one knew better than he, how to modulate his tone so as to express righteous anger or tender sympathy according to his mood. His power of modulating his voice served him in place of gesture, which he used very sparingly. He spoke with

ease, and therefore was heard with pleasure, by audiences that were enabled to follow the thread of his argument from beginning to end. The student will note in his observations of other speakers, that there is what is called a circumflex or compound inflection which is a union of the rising and falling inflections. It is sometimes used to express admiration, as in Tennyson's poem, "*Noble Six Hundred!*" Again, it conveys the idea of incredulity as in the remark often made on the narration of a marvellous story, "*Impossible!*" or it may be used ironically as when Mark Antony speaks of Brutus as an "*honourable* man." It is a wave of sound, rising and falling alternately, and contains great resources of expression.

✓ The changing tones of the voice constitute the melody of speech; and to the charm of variety they are also capable of adding rhetorical significance and logical force. Inflection is a vocal commentary on the sense which the words are intended to bear. Whole sentences are modulated in order to distinguish the more important from the subordinate passages. This, like the other processes mentioned, is perfectly natural as the student can see for himself by quietly noting the changes of tone which occur among any group of people talk-

ing together. Here again he must adhere to nature, when he addresses a public gathering. If he departs from it, he will pay the penalty of the greater exertion of voice which speaking at an artificial level demands; and although an audience will be grateful to him if he makes himself well heard, they will not be so well pleased as they would be if he had added to the merit of distinctness that of variety of tone. There are many other points in elocution, that deserve the student's attention. The vowels should be given a full, open sound, and the final consonants should be distinctly articulated. The breath should be kept well in reserve at the opening of sentences, so as to be available where it is needed, to prevent that falling away of the voice at the close which is characteristic of inaudible speech and careless elocution. Audibility is not gained by loudness. The conversational pitch of the voice travels farther than that of a high key, and it entails upon the speaker the least amount of exertion. Every speaker should be careful not to raise his voice above the conversational pitch, in the beginning of his speech, before a large audience, where the temptation to do so is very strong. There is a double advantage in commencing in a low

voice. The speaker reserves his strength, and secures the silent attention of those farthest off. The question of time, or rate of utterance in delivery, is very important. Some speakers rattle on so fast as to baffle all the efforts of the reporters. The rate of speaking should be slow rather than quick, and should never exceed that of animated conversation. Explanatory clauses and parenthetical sentences are pronounced in quicker time than those relating to the principal subjects. A reader who ignored all the grammatical stops in the text before him, would not be more insufferable than the speaker who should, in the wild rush of his oratory, prevent the audience from weighing his words, and connecting sense and sound, in the progress of the argument. The speaker's own ear must be his guide for those pauses which the reader finds marked down in his book. But he should be able also to avail himself of the rhetorical pause, which, as we have seen in the first chapter, occurs at the speaker's own discretion, and is employed for the purpose of fixing the attention of the audiences on what immediately follows, so as to make it more impressive. For example, speaking of death, the preacher says, "Expect, therefore, that

which is natural in itself, and which must be fit—because it is the appointment of Heaven.” The grammatical pause after the word *fit* would be simply a comma, but the speaker greatly enhances the force of his argument by a prolonged stop. He might have made this stop after the word *because*, or after the word *is*, with equal if not greater effect; “which must be fit, because—it is the appointment of Heaven;” or, “which must be fit, because it is—the appointment of Heaven.” The student should be careful in the distribution of emphasis. It must be laid on the right word or words, in order to bring out the true meaning. Every phrase has a principal word, which should be specially accented; and every sentence has a principal idea, conveyed in words which should be distinguished from the subordinate words. A speaker will be too emphatic in delivery, if he pronounces clauses which are merely accessory, with as much force as he does those which express the leading idea of the sentence or passage. This is another instance in which the student must work according to nature. In ordinary speech emphasis is used only where it is required. There is, if I may say so, a vocal light-and-shade which gives to speech its

varied colours, and blends them all in expressive harmony; but which we often lose in public assemblies because we lose self-control. Loss of self-control involves loss of some natural power, and the substitution for it of something which is artificial, and therefore displeasing. It is the same with speakers who assume awkward attitudes and ungraceful gestures on the platform. They have forgotten their natural demeanour, and adopted unconsciously a demeanour which is unbecoming because it is unnatural. The student will try, then, to avoid all studied posturing, on the one hand, all slouching, on the other. There must be no contortions of the body; no twisting of the legs below, or waving of the hands above. ✓ A speaker should plant himself firmly on both feet before he begins, just as if he were standing upright in front of his own door, and with as little regard to the precise angle of heel or toe, in the one case as in the other. His feet will be all right if they support his body firmly, and enable him to move with ease and dignity. ✓ The arms should hang carelessly from the shoulders till they are called into action by some thought or emotion which is expressed in gesture, as well as in word. Then the hands will come into play, and, if not

extravagantly used, may serve according to the disposition of the speaker to accentuate a proposition or an argument. The amount of gesticulation employed in public speaking seems to be largely a matter of temperament. Some individuals of the same race are more excitable and energetic than others, and more inclined to gesticulate while talking; and the same is true of the more excitable races. But the finished orator avoids excess in this as in all other parts of his art; and experience has taught him that, while the gesture which is irrepressible is nearly always appropriate, that which is rare is the most significant and effective.

Hamlet's directions to the players constitute a lesson in delivery, the wisdom of which is universally acknowledged; and I invite the student, who is, I trust, already familiar with the lines, to accompany me in an attempt to elicit their full meaning. It will be convenient, for this purpose, to take each paragraph separately. What has been suggested on the subject of judicious emphasis will be illustrated by the accentuation of certain words: "Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth it, as many of our players

do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines." It may be supposed that in the time of Shakespeare, as in ours, some actors were in the habit of mumbling instead of distinctly uttering their words. They spoke as if the words clung to the roof of the mouth, and were impeded in their passage to the outer air. Hence the exhortation, Speak the speech trippingly on the tongue. Perhaps no other word in the language could so clearly and so adequately denote the remedy for slow, thick utterance as the word *trippingly*. The sound of the word seems to convey its meaning. It implies a nimble, light and airy resonance, striking pleasantly on the ear. But in the whole of this place Shakespeare is measured and restrained in his generalisations. In curing the speaker of one fault, on one side, he is careful to guard him against another in the opposite direction, and, therefore, Hamlet adds to his first injunction, "But if you mouth it? I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines." He does not want the boisterous, swelling notes of artificial passion, which the ill-instructed actor employs, and which attract attention to himself, while diverting it from the character which he impersonates. The town-crier is happily still a survival in many



parts of the country; and a useful and picturesque member of society. But when we avail ourselves of his good services we think more of the strength of his lungs, than of his elocutionary skill. Hamlet, continuing, passes from voice to gesture: "Nor do not saw the air too much; your hand thus; but use all gently: for in the very torrent, tempest, and (as I may say) whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance, that may give it smoothness." What was the particular gesture which Hamlet stigmatised as sawing the air, we need not inquire. We get a general notion of it from the context, which brings before us three lively images of passion, in ascending grades of violence—torrent, tempest, and whirlwind. In the midst of these we are to be gentle, temperate, and restrained, so far as the action of the body is concerned. The instruction, steeped as it is in the vivid colouring of the poetic imagination, is not to be taken literally, but the warning against all extravagant use of the hands is unmistakable. Though the speaker should be assailed by all the furies, he must never for a moment lose control of himself. He must guide the whirlwind and direct the storm of his own emotions. The same

idea is further enforced: "O! it offends me to the soul, to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings; who, for the most part, are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise: I would have such a fellow whipp'd for o'erdoing Termagant; it out-herods Herod: pray you avoid it." Dr. Johnson has told us who the "groundlings" were. He says: "The meaner people then seem to have sat below, as they now sit in the upper gallery, who, not well understanding poetical language, were sometimes gratified by a mimical and mute representation of the drama, previous to the dialogue"; and we learn from another commentator (Percy) that Termagant was a Saracen deity, very clamorous and violent in the old moralities, as a certain class of plays were called. The first player breaks in with an acknowledgment of the directions: "I warrant your honour," and Hamlet proceeds:

"Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor: suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature: for anything so overdone is from the purpose of playing; whose end both at the first, and now, was, and is, to hold as

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'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh cannot but make the judicious grieve; the censure of which one must, in your allowance, o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. O! there be players, that I have seen play — and heard others praise, and that highly — not to speak it profanely, that, neither having the accent of Christians, nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made men and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably."

"Suit the action to the word, the word to the action;" herein lies the whole law of gesticulation and movement in public speaking. In reading, the word comes before the action, but at so short an interval, that the distance which separates the two is imperceptible. In speaking, the thought or idea precedes both, and it may suggest the word before the action, or the action before the word, whichever has, from past associations, the stronger hold on the imagination and the memory. Both will be practically, if not actually, simultaneous, but the important thing is that they shall not be incongruously combined. Avoiding a too

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spirited style, on the one hand, and tameness, on the other, let your own discretion judge of the happy mean where true art is to be found. The student must not forget, however, that Hamlet's directions are for the players and not for the orators, though the latter may profit by them, and that while the purpose of the drama is to give a representation of life and action, the purpose of the oration is simply to persuade. I do not venture upon any interpretation of Hamlet's lines from the actor's point of view. In considering them, I limit myself to their indirect application to oratory. The injunction to "o'erstep not the modesty of nature" announces a fundamental principle which should be always borne in mind. Whenever gesture is spontaneous, it is as a rule appropriate; when premeditated, it may greatly weaken and mar the general effect. It has been already shown, in the case ✓ of a great orator, that the deepest passion may be represented by inflection of tone, especially when this is combined with the rhetoric of the eye, and the features. Movements of the hands should be regulated, like those of the whole body, chiefly with regard to ease and gracefulness of carriage; and while a speaker should avoid a stiff and rigid attitude, he need

not affect the airs of a dancing master, however meritorious these may be in their own place. Then, the censure of one of the judicious is to count more than that of a whole theatre of the unskilful. Here, as in the contemptuous reference to the groundlings, we get perhaps a touch of the feudal spirit, which, notwithstanding Shakespeare's lofty impartiality, breathes through his immortal productions; and it may be observed that there is no form of art of which the populace is so good a judge as it is of oratory. It prefers an animated to a spiritless style; but the great orator can always move it, be his style what it may; and it knows when it is moved. But whatever makes the judicious grieve, and the unskilful laugh, at the same moment, will probably be a violation of natural propriety, and as such worthy of condemnation. Both orator and actor are alike prohibited from doing or saying anything to offend persons of learning and taste, merely for the sake of raising a laugh from the vulgar, while they are free to disregard the taste which is too fastidious, and the learning which is pedantic. The strutting and bellowing which Shakespeare censured in his own day, have descended to our times, and may occasionally be seen and heard on both

stage and platform. The student need hardly be warned against the offences of those who "imitate humanity so abominably." Hamlet's final direction, though intended only for the clowns of the play, contains a valuable piece of advice for the inexperienced speaker. He will be often tempted to digress from the main purpose of his speech, in order to take up with something more promising which has flashed across his mind. He should be careful how he yields to this temptation, for though it is easy to deviate from the fixed course, it is difficult to get back to it again, when the new idea which obtruded itself has been disposed of.

"And let those, that play your clowns, speak no more than is set down for them: for there be of them, that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too; though, in the meantime, some necessary question of the play be then to be considered: that's villainous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it."

The soul of delivery is in the manful assertion of the orator's personality, in the revelation of the high purpose by which he is actuated, in the profound conviction of the truth of his cause, in the firm resolve to estab-

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lish it, in the dauntless spirit that faces all obstacles, and, conquering them, sweeps onward to the desired goal.

## CHAPTER VI

### EXTEMPORE SPEAKING

**T**HE importance already assigned to extempore speaking will, I hope, have prepared the student for the separate treatment of the subject, which is now attempted. In this, as in every other branch of the art of oratory, I sometimes see suggestions made to learners which I am unable to indorse, for the simple reason that they do not answer either to my observation or my experience. I feel, however, that these may be well founded in the observation and experience of those who put them forward, though I cannot adopt them. And I think the student would be well advised to give all reasonable methods a fair trial, and to judge of each by the test of experience. I know that one may speak, with good effect, on a subject he understands, from a few notes hastily put together; that he may speak better with fuller preparation and ample notes; and that he may write down every word, and laboriously commit the whole of a long discourse to memory,



and deliver it in a manner that will not only command the attention of a great audience, but also win their heartiest applause. But no method is so easy as the extempore method, when it is once thoroughly acquired, and none is more effective. I have already, in the first chapter, quoted the examples of the great orators of antiquity, and of the French Revolution, in favour of written speeches, but without venturing to express my own opinion. I give my opinion now, for what it is worth, because the limits of the writing method must be clearly fixed in some general rule before we can profitably consider the extempore method. My deliberate conclusion is that the practising speaker, under which may be enumerated the politician, the preacher, the professional advocate, and the teacher, should make extempore speaking the rule, and the written speech the unavoidable exception. That is to say, the orator, as distinguished from the occasional speaker, should never write his speech for delivery unless he is forced to do so by special circumstances. When these special circumstances, of which in each case he must himself be the judge, arise, he will consult his own convenience. The practice of literary composition for its own sake, apart altogether from

any idea of utilising the composition as a speech, if not too exclusively pursued, will help the orator in his extempore efforts, for it is an aid towards accuracy of expression, which a too exclusive practice of speaking alone is apt to impair. But the habit of speaking from a written composition committed to memory, regarded simply as a habit, is, I am convinced, a hindrance to extemporising. It weakens the power of extempore thinking, in the first place, and it taxes the memory at the expense of the other faculties.

Dr. Alexander Bain, in his work on *Education As A Science*, says truly:

“The absolute power of retentiveness in any individual mind, is a limited quantity. There is no way of extending this limit except by encroaching on some of the other powers of the mind, or else by quickening the mental faculties altogether, at the expense of the bodily functions. An unnatural memory may be produced at the cost of reason, judgment and imagination, or at the cost of the emotional aptitudes. This is not a desirable result.”

The loss of power involved in learning by heart a long speech is not compensated by the advantages accompanying its delivery, except in those cases where the speech has to be sev-

eral times repeated. The lectures which are given to various literary societies throughout the country during the winter months, are for the greater part written beforehand and committed to memory once for all, because the same lecture is repeated in each place. One great advantage of this which is not obvious, may be mentioned. After the first engagement the lecturer is less dependent on the state of his health on any particular date, when he knows that the matter of his lecture is in perfect order, and the very words in which it is to be given to the audience firmly fixed in his memory. It is so much easier to repeat a speech you have already made than to think one out on your legs before an audience. There are other advantages which will easily occur to the student's mind. The attention which the arrangement of your matter would require in an extempore discourse, may in this case be given wholly to your manner of delivery. And you will feel more at your ease both before and during the performance of your task.

The various occasions on which a speaker may find it desirable to write what he intends to say are briefly mentioned in the first chapter; but none of these, nor the instance of

literary discourse just given, enables us to compare the writing method with the extempore method all round. Let anyone think for a moment of the labour of writing and committing to memory a series of speeches, on different subjects, in the space, say, of a few weeks, and then consider how much easier it would be for him to deliver the same number of speeches, on the same number of subjects, in the same space of time, extemporaneously, and he will at once see the real difference between the first method and the second, regarded solely from the point of view of the amount of mental and physical energy expended. Undoubtedly the extempore method demands longer practice before the approach to perfection is attained, and this practice must be kept up to be efficacious on all occasions. An extempore speaker out of practice is at a loss when suddenly called upon for a considerable effort. He is not master of the instruments of his art. The memory and imagination alike are weak, and the voice is wanting in articulate flexibility. A remedy for the last defect may, as we have insisted, be found in reading aloud; a remedy for the other two must be sought in the actual exercise of speaking. Yet the extempore method of public

speaking is to be preferred by all who aspire to be real orators. It is the natural method, and as such must have its origin in something which we do naturally and spontaneously, which is anterior to it, and which we do without ever dreaming of appearing before a public audience. Oratory has its origin neither in reading nor writing, but in conversation. And I suspect that when it is taught in writing the method of tuition, as in the case of teaching a foreign living tongue, is chosen more for its convenience than for its efficiency. Extempore speaking consists in thinking before an audience and expressing by word of mouth thoughts as they arise in the mind. This is what we do in ordinary conversation; and extempore oratory is, therefore, but a development under altered conditions, of the power of conversation. If the man who does not hesitate to speak his mind freely in a private company could imagine, when he faces a public audience for the first time, that he is going to have a little talk with a few friends he would conquer the initial difficulty of extempore speaking. What the beginner suffers from as we have seen is a want of self-possession. We feel the same want sometimes in private society, and we know by experience

that the best way to gain self-possession in conversation is to enlarge our intercourse with our friends and acquaintances. The same rule applies to public speaking. To fail more or less, at the first attempt, is the fate of all; to succeed more or less is as truly the fortune of those who persevere. But this chapter is not intended for maiden speakers to whom I have already addressed myself. The student who has accompanied me through the preceding pages is now invited to ascend to a higher plane of eloquence. The power of extempore speech on great subjects can be exercised only by one who is a master of perspicuous statement, of rhetorical appeal, of argumentative force; one who possesses a trained voice, a good delivery, a copious vocabulary, a mind rich in ideas, a memory for events and illustrations, and a sympathetic imagination. The means by which some of these qualifications may be acquired and developed have been sketched, but it remains to offer some hints on the acquisition of a store of words and ideas, and the means of assisting the memory and strengthening the imagination.

If, as I have tried to show, oratory originated in conversation, its natural development must be sought there, in the first instance.

The habit of observation alone, without knowledge conveyed in books, will supply matter for daily talk; and if students were encouraged to speak often upon the common facts of life which come under their notice they would soon acquire a large stock of words, and the power of fluent expression. The declamation of passages committed to memory, so useful in the teaching of elocution, is no substitute for the natural method of acquiring fluency. And it must be remembered that the unpractised speaker wants both fluency of words and fluency of ideas. In the debating societies of some schools the custom is still maintained of allowing the pupils, who open for the affirmative and negative, respectively, to write out their speeches and speak them from memory or read them from the manuscript. I cannot believe that this method is a sound one for the training of speakers. It is an exercise in writing and reciting, not in speaking. It is an attempt to combine, again for the sake of convenience, two different functions, that of the writer and the orator, and may be excused though it cannot be justified by the plea that it promotes skill in composition. There is a further plea that the pupil cannot be expected to speak ex-

temporarily, on the question whether Brutus was justified in killing Caesar, or to argue offhand as to the relative merits of a monarchical and a republican form of government, two favourite topics with debating societies. But the answer to this is that the pupil should not be called upon to debate a subject beyond his knowledge and his powers, even with the laudable purpose of compelling him to study history. In the early stages of his practice he should never be taken out of the region of his own experiences, for the great object is to induce him to talk about that which he knows and feels. This, and this alone, is oratory. This, alone, is an exercise in the art of persuasion. Literary composition pure and simple is not oratory; recitation is not oratory; but the spontaneous outpouring of thought, passion, conviction, and sentiment, the utterance of joy or sorrow, of admiration or aversion, of love or hatred, of terror or pity, of all righteous impressions, is oratory; in other words, it is articulate human nature, natural eloquence rushing from the heart and soul of man. Let the student, therefore, be exercised on the events or news of the day, when he speaks in private company; and when he joins his debating society let him be offered a subject in



which both himself and his fellow members can feel some personal interest. It may, indeed, minister to his vanity to ask him to debate some well known topic, which has divided historians, moralists, and philosophers, for thousands of years, but it will not augment his power of self-expression, which is the germ of all oratorical excellence. The subjects with which our studies or our pursuits have made us most familiar, are the most appropriate for exercises in debate and extempore speaking. And they are also to be preferred because the student can master them without the aid of the pen. It is the faculty of rapid thinking and ready speaking that needs to be exercised, though writing for its own sake cannot be over-valued. Next to the practice of daily conversation and discussion, the reading of good books is to be commended as an aid to extempore speech. In all the references I have hitherto made to reading exercises I have considered reading only as a means of training the voice; but its utility as a means of enriching the mind constitutes its most precious value. The literature of one's country is the abiding product of its history, the imperishable reflection of its life and character. In it are enshrined the bright thoughts, the stirring

emotions, the glorious aspirations, the violent ambitions, the struggles, trials, and triumphs, the vice, and virtue, and heroism, of the race. Where, if not here, shall the public speaker find words, ideas, and inspiration? Where can he seek the philosophical justification of his doctrine and general principles or enlightened stimulus to his courage, enthusiasm, patriotism, and humanity? Frequent reading of the best authors is essential to good extempore speaking, in an age in which information is so widely diffused. They are an inexhaustible source of eloquence. The best prose and the best poetry, history, philosophy, and science should all be laid under tribute. Every quality of literary style is fertile in suggestion to the man who desires to influence his own age by the power of the spoken word. The unadorned simplicity of one writer, the figurative splendour of another, the manner which is easy and diffuse, that which is solid and sententious, the humorous or the pathetic style, the descriptive, the argumentative, the persuasive and the personal, whether consisting of panegyric or invective, may all be studied with advantage. History supplies the data for great schemes of policy, and illustrates the master motives in the lives of men

who have moulded the destinies of nations. Biography furnishes their apology, if not their vindication. Philosophy bestows upon each one the measure of abstract truth which he is capable of receiving. Science holds in her wide domain the facts by which the world is sustained and the laws by which it is governed. And Poetry is the sublime expression of universal truth, the revelation of imaginative beauty, the throbbing music of the human heart, the glowing language of the passions and the affections, of yearning desire and spiritual aspiration. One who reads the great authors with care and judgment appropriates unconsciously their purer language, their deeper thought, their nobler style, and their animating spirit. He ought to note besides the word and the idea, the form of the expression, and the effect which it produces on himself, so that he may be able to reproduce it when necessary. The writer ought, perhaps, to read with a pen in his hand; but the speaker will do better to close the book from time to time, and try to produce in spoken words the form and substance of what he has been reading. Composition with the pen is one thing, composition by word of mouth is another, and

of the two exercises the latter is the more useful to the orator.

Mr. Isaac Butt, one of the ablest and most persuasive orators that ever addressed the House of Commons, in preparing his speeches, used to repeat to himself, in his room, the most important parts of what he intended to say, whether he spoke in the House or on the platform. Ancient and modern writers on eloquence agree in recommending translation from a foreign language as an aid to copiousness and facility of expression. It certainly must tend to the increase of our vocabulary, for one thinks in the work of translation of many synonymous terms before selecting that which is the most appropriate. Those whose lingual studies are not sufficiently advanced to enable them to practise exercises in translation, may arrive at similar results by converting passages of their own language into other words, an exercise which Quintilian highly recommends.

“About the utility of turning poetry into prose [he says], I suppose that no one has any doubt; and that is the only kind of exercise that Sulpicius is said to have used; for its sublimity may elevate our style, and the boldness of the expressions adopted by poetic license does not preclude the orator’s effort to express

the same thoughts in the exactness of prose. He may even add to those thoughts oratorical vigour, supply what has been omitted, and give compactness to that which is diffuse, since I would not have our paraphrase to be a mere interpretation, but an effort to vie with and rival our original in the expression of the same thoughts. I therefore differ in opinion from those who disapprove of paraphrasing our orations, on the pretext that, as the best words and phrases have been already used, whatever we express in another form, must of necessity be expressed worse. . . . If a thought could be expressed well only in one way, it would be but right to suppose that the path of excellence has been shut against us by some of our predecessors; but in reality there are still innumerable modes of saying a thing, and many roads leading to the same point. Conciseness has its charms, and so has copiousness; there is one kind of beauty in metaphorical, another in simple expressions; direct expressions become one subject, and such as are varied by figures another. In addition, the difficulty of the exercise is most serviceable. Are not our greatest authors by this means studied most carefully? For in this way we do not run over what we have written in a careless mode of reading, but consider every individual portion, and look, from necessity, thoroughly into their matter, and learn how much merit they possess from the very fact that we cannot succeed in imitating them."

The reading of great poetry strengthens the imagination while adding to our vocabulary; and the study of great oratory, in reported speeches, not with a view to slavish imitation, but rather for suggestion of method and form, rewards assiduous cultivation.

Although the absolute power of retentiveness is as we have seen a limited quantity, the memory, like all the other faculties of the mind, may be strengthened by exercise. But the form of exercise best adapted to the purpose of the extempore speaker demands careful consideration. I do not believe that it is to be found in the repetition of passages learned by heart, but in the actual practice of speaking without notes of any description. The extempore speaker in constant practice needs no other exercise than that which his practice affords. The occasional speaker must exercise himself within the four walls of his own study, and there harangue an imaginary audience, if he cannot induce an indulgent household to listen to him. I have more faith in devices for assisting the memory in particular cases than I have in many which are suggested for strengthening it, but which seem to me to tax it unduly. And nothing is more important with this view than the methodical

arrangement of the various parts of a speech from beginning to end. The preacher has an advantage over the advocate and the politician, that he can choose his own subject; but if everyone cannot choose his own subject, he can at least determine for himself its mode of treatment. He can select the topics by which it is to be elucidated, mark out his divisions, arrange the order of his facts, illustrations, and arguments, grouping all around the central idea which he wants to enforce. The method should not be formally announced to the audience, and it should be felt rather than observed by them, as the speaker proceeds so that at the close they may be completely pleased and satisfied with the whole address, without reference to any of its parts, though some parts may be more telling than others. When a speaker has ample notice, and days or weeks for preparation, there need be no difficulty about his method, whether he prepares by word of mouth, or with pen and paper. He has only to realise the advantages of method in the first place, and then maturely consider its application. If his subject is an important one his matter may have to be collected from many sources, and he may have to rely on many authorities, as often happens in relation to ques-

tions before Parliament, or trials in the courts. The larger and more complex the subject is, the greater the need for division, order, and natural sequence, so that the whole design of the speech may bear the stamp of coherence, strength and unity.

The logical sequence of ideas powerfully aids the memory, because the transition from one idea to another which is closely related to it is a natural mental operation. Without writing one sentence for delivery the whole plan of a great speech may be sketched in outline, with the pen, and the matter arranged under appropriate heads and sub-heads. Notes thus made will relieve the strain on the memory, and may be freely used by the extempore speaker with the greatest advantage to the ease, vigour, and lucidity, of his oration. But he must be careful not to embarrass himself with too many notes. The fewer he has the less risk there is of confusion of thought, and its inevitable consequences, confusion of words. Some speakers are naturally ready and quick, to whom any but the briefest notes would be, not a help, but a hindrance; others are deliberate and slow, and able to take full advantage of copious notes carefully elaborated. If one determined resolutely never to



use a note except for the purpose of quotation, whether of statistics, opinions, or statements, he would probably gain in the power of extemporising, but his power would be a variable quantity, and at its best only when he was himself at his best mentally and physically. It sometimes happens, however, even to the strongest man, that he has days on which he is not as strong as usual, when to use a familiar phrase, he is not in good form, and a few brief notes then give an assurance of confidence which is of the utmost value. I was present at a meeting where one of the most eloquent of living orators, a leading statesman, who frequently speaks without notes, lost the thread of his discourse. He stopped suddenly, and, after a pause, asked those on the platform, near him, what it was he had just been saying. Strangely enough no one could tell him. Without losing his self-possession, he stood for some time as if contemplating some distant scene, while the audience was as still as the ocean in a dead calm, and almost breathless with suppressed sympathy. The interval was short, but in the circumstances it seemed very long, at length the speaker recovered the lost thread, and proceeded with his speech as if there had been no stoppage. To

a man of less presence of mind and less practice in speaking such an incident might have been fatal to the speech and it illustrates the utility of a brief note as a safeguard, which I have been urging. I recollect, indeed, a similar incident in the House of Commons, which occurred to another distinguished orator, and which abruptly terminated his speech. This was the case of a speaker who always spoke from notes. He broke down at the opening when he had uttered only two or three short sentences, owing to imperfect eyesight, and his inability to make any use of the notes before him. He sat down suddenly, but no one rose to continue the debate. The Speaker, rightly interpreting the feeling of the members, rose and said with great kindness and dignity: "The House desires the Right Honourable gentleman to resume his speech." He thanked the Speaker and the House, in one short sentence, but did not resume. The first of these two cases, as it seems to me, shows an extempore orator in a difficulty for want of a note; and the second shows an orator accustomed to the use of copious notes, unable for want of practice to make an extempore effort.

If one wants to see extempore speeches in process of manufacture, so to speak, he must

take his seat among the members of some deliberative assembly, or sit behind counsel who are engaged in Court. In both places debate is constantly going on, and questions are raised without notice, which have to be met without preparation. The speakers in each case are obliged to rely chiefly on their general knowledge, and the tact and judgment acquired by experience. Suppose there is a debate in the House of Commons of a new reform bill, a bill to increase the number of voters, or, as it is sometimes called, a bill for the extension of the franchise. Some of the ablest speeches ever made in Parliament have been made on the question of electoral reform. It involves the consideration of the relations of the different classes of society towards each other; the relations of the Lords and the Commons; the question whether government should be in the hands of the well educated few, persons of property, or the uneducated or ill-educated many, persons of no property. It is a subject full of historical and classical associations relating to many of the great functions of Government. No parliamentary speaker of any eminence would have the slightest hesitation in taking part in a debate on a question so attractive and suggestive; but if he is required to

follow a formidable adversary, and answer him, he must put forth all his powers, yet he will do this from a few notes, hastily jotted down, while the adversary is speaking, and of so meagre a character that they would be quite unintelligible to anyone else into whose hands they might fall. The order of these notes would depend, too, on the previous speaker, whose points would be set down for reply as they were delivered. They might be in the following form, one or two words only standing for each section of the answering speech.

1. Classes.
2. Lords *v.* Commons.
3. Education.
4. Property.
5. Taxation *v.* Representation.
6. Public Opinion.
7. Government.

One who had mastered the subject might speak from these headings on either side of the question. Let us suppose he is in favour of extending the right to vote in parliamentary elections. The first word of his notes suggests to him the inequality of the existing system, the fact that all classes are not adequately represented, and that the restrictions in force

exclude the great mass of people from a share in the Government of their own country. The second point reminds him that the educated and propertied classes need not fear the legislative energy of a more popularly elected House of Commons for they are amply protected against revolutionary change by the power of the House of Lords. The third point raises in his mind the whole social condition of the people; and if they are ignorant and illiterate he holds that this is in itself a condemnation of the system of government which has failed to encourage and promote education. The sense of responsibility which accompanies political power is, he will argue, an educational influence of the best description. Coming to the fourth point he will show that while property is well represented in both Houses of Parliament industry and labour are not adequately represented in either. He can easily pass from this to his fifth point and become eloquent on the great constitutional doctrine that taxation and representation should go together. When he reaches his sixth point he will contend that the public opinion of the country has approved the proposed admission of the working classes to the franchise; and his last point will afford him

an opportunity of discussing, and enlarging upon, the end of all government, which he will declare to be the happiness and contentment of a self-governed people.

Let us now assume that a speech on these lines has just been delivered, and that a speaker rises to reply to it, using the same brief notes, which he has scribbled down on a half sheet of notepaper, or on a blank page of the "Orders of the Day," as the programme of the day's business in Parliament is called. As to the first point, he will object to the suggestion that Parliament should be constituted on the basis of the representation of classes. He will assert that the true constitutional doctrine is that Parliament represents, and legislates for, the nation as a whole, without any reference to particular classes; and that the existing system is the best, because it secures the election of those who are best qualified for the duties to be discharged. Passing to the question of Lords and Commons he will recall the fact that there have been in past times acute conflicts between both Houses of Parliament, that the effect of the proposal might be a renewal of conflict; and that it is at all events a constitutional experiment the consequences of which no man can foresee. On the third point

of the admission of the uneducated, he will perhaps see the wisdom of conceding to his opponent that the government of the country has not done all that it might have done for the education of the people; but that what is wanted is an education bill, not a franchise bill, and that the true policy is to educate first; and to enfranchise afterwards, if any further enfranchisement is necessary. He will urge that however desirable it may be to cultivate a sense of responsibility among the people they ought not to be entrusted with power before they are fit to exercise it with judgment and moderation. He meets the fourth point with a direct negative, and shows by the several Acts which Parliament has passed for the benefit of the working classes, that labour and industry are represented and their interests fully considered. With regard to the fifth, the constitutional doctrine of taxation and representation: he objects to the revolutionary interpretation put upon it by the Honourable member opposite. That doctrine thus interpreted, if pushed to its logical consequence, would justify a much larger measure of reform than the bill before the House. It would justify a measure for universal suffrage, including women as well as men; in

short, everyone who paid a tax, however small, must be given a vote. There could be no taxation at present without the consent of the three Estates of the Realm. The Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and the Commons, and that is what he understood the doctrine of taxation and representation to imply. As to the sixth point, that public opinion was in favour of the bill, he submits that in a matter of such far-reaching importance opinions must be weighed as well as counted, and he is fully persuaded that the opinion of those having the largest stake in the prosperity of the country are wholly opposed to the measure. He will object to the final contention of his opponent as being somewhat academic, and that a question of practical politics cannot be settled by vague abstract declarations. Government for the people is one thing; government by the people is another and very different thing; and for his own part he believes, that the nation is best governed which is governed by its natural leaders, the men of property, intelligence and education.

This little debate is purely imaginary; at the most, it recalls only some wandering echoes of past discussions. The arguments *pro* and *con* may be good or bad; but I have



introduced them here solely for the purpose of showing how much lies behind a note of one or two words, in the hands of a practised extempore speaker. A man who understood the question in all its bearings, constitutional, historical, and political, might speak for hours, from these brief notes, out of the fulness of his general knowledge; and each note would greatly relieve the strain on his memory by supplying him with the necessary link between one stage and another of his address. Advocates at the Bar, though briefed for the opening speech, have to speak extemporaneously when they enter upon a refutation of the case made out on the other side, and often in circumstances which preclude note-taking altogether. The notes made by a barrister, when he is fighting his case, are often so many irregular scrawls, with crosses, and circles, and interlining, added here and there, to attract his attention, when he comes to the summing up, and his final appeal to the jury. These imperfect notes are, however, a great help to him. Each one of them, though it be only a single word, represents a point which he considers too good to be lost, and which, according to the fugitive nature of ideas that suddenly enter the mind, will escape if it

✓ be not secured on paper. The point may have been suggested to him by a remark from the Judge, or the answer of a witness, or something said or done by the opposing counsel, and down it goes, to be used or not at a later stage of the case as circumstances may determine. The adjournment of a case to the next day will give an advocate a much desired opportunity of preparing a speech; and the time thus gained for meditation and arrangement will be fully utilised, with the best advantage to his client. In parliamentary debates, the adjournment over the dinner hour serves, in like manner, to enable a speaker to fortify himself with convincing proofs and telling quotations, or, if these are not required, it will give him at least the benefit of fuller reflection on the scope and method of his argument. Any speech delivered without manuscript may be regarded as an extempore speech, no matter how much time has been given to its preparation, if the choice of words is left to the inspiration of the moment. The extempore speeches we hear from the platform, and the extempore sermons which are preached in a pulpit, are generally well prepared, and supported by ample notes. But there is no ex-

ception to the rule that all good speaking must be founded on a clear conception of the object aimed at in the speech. If the speaker has any doubt in his mind upon this essential point, he ought to formulate his aim and purpose in a distinct proposition, and then resolutely set his mind to the task of arranging his matter on the plan best adapted to establish that proposition; never forgetting that associated ideas should be placed in juxtaposition; that the parts should be justly proportioned, and constitute in their union, a comprehensive and harmonious whole.

## CHAPTER VII

### DEMOSTHENES ON THE CROWN

**I**F, as I have suggested, in the preceding chapter, an acquaintance with history, biography, poetry, and general literature be useful to the public speaker, how much more advantageous and instructive to him must be the study of reported masterpieces of ancient and modern eloquence. Nothing, it must be remembered, is so important for him as his own practice; next to this must be ranked his observation of the methods of other speakers; and next the models which he has inherited from the great orators of the past. In directing his attention to some of these I shall be guided solely by their instructive value from an oratorical point of view, and the desire to present, within reasonable compass, a comprehensive variety of styles. The study of a great speech, from beginning to end, is a lesson in the practical application of the principles of oratory. Telling phrases and fine passages, however effective, do not constitute a great speech, and these will be better appre-

ciated in the body of the speech, than if they are taken separately from their context. Moreover, time devoted to the selection of passages of exceptional beauty would be thrown away, unless one had a firm grasp of method and form, and some idea of style. The essence of every style is the individuality of the speaker, and therefore there can be no fixed standard of style; but it is none the less true that the contemplation of the best models will greatly help the discriminating student. Ancient Greece is regarded in our system of education as the fountain-head of literature, philosophy, and oratory; and in oratory, Demosthenes is not only the greatest of the Greeks, but the greatest perhaps of all nations and all times. It is therefore fitting that our examination of great speeches should commence with him. His oration *On the Crown* is regarded by the learned as his noblest effort, and as it embraces almost every quality of the great style it seems to be the speech which will best repay full consideration. The subject-matter of this oration is a vindication of the whole public life and policy of Demosthenes, in the form of a defence of Ctesiphon, for a decree which he proposed in favour of Demosthenes, and for which he was prosecuted

by Æschines, the second of Athenian orators, and the enemy of Demosthenes. Ctesiphon introduced a bill to the Council of Five Hundred proposing to reward Demosthenes with a golden crown for his gifts of money to the public, and for his general integrity and good conduct as a statesman. His bill having been approved by the Council and then brought before the popular assembly was passed in the shape of a decree which declared:

“Whereas Demosthenes son of Demosthenes of Pæania, having been superintendent of the repair of the walls, and having expended on the works three additional talents out of his own money, hath given that sum to the people: and whereas having been appointed treasurer of the theoric fund, he hath given to the theoric officers of the tribes a hundred minas towards the sacrifices, the council and people of Athens have resolved to honour Demosthenes son of Demosthenes of Pæania with public praise for the goodness and generosity which he has shown throughout on every occasion to the people of Athens, and to crown him with a golden crown, and to proclaim the crown in the theatre, at the Dionysian festival, at the performance of the new tragedies: the proclamation to be given in charge to the new prize-master.”

An indictment embodying all the objections of the opposite party to this decree was pre-

ferred before the Archon, the chief magistrate of Athens, to whose cognisance a criminal proceeding of this kind appertained; and it was tried before five hundred jurors. The indictment, after reciting the decree, alleged that it violated the Athenian laws in three points: First, because it was unlawful to make false allegations in any of the State documents; secondly, because it was unlawful to confer a crown upon any person who had an account to render of his official conduct; and Demosthenes was both a Conservator of Walls and a treasurer of the theoric fund; thirdly, because it was unlawful to proclaim the honour of a crown in the theatre at the Dionysian festival, at the performance of the new tragedies; the law being, that if the Council gave a crown, it should be published in the council-hall; and if the people, in the Pnyx at the popular assembly. The first of these points was raised to enable the prosecution to attack the political conduct of Demosthenes generally; but it was on the other two, the strictly legal points, they relied for securing a verdict. The verdict was against Æschines and his party on all points, and as he failed to obtain a fifth of the votes he was compelled, under the law of Athens, to go into exile. The two

speeches have come down to us and ought to be read together.

The attack of Æschines is a powerful one, only inferior to the defence made by Demosthenes; and we must examine it briefly before passing on to the greater oration. In so weighty a cause much depends upon a happy introduction, and Æschines makes more than one good point in the opening of his address. He clearly identifies the prosecution with the constitutional rights of the people. After calling attention to certain grave results of unpunished illegality he says:

“ One element of the constitution still remains (if I happen to be right in my opinion) prosecutions for violation of the laws. But if you will abolish these also, or sanction those abolishing them, I forewarn you that you will imperceptibly yield your constitutional rights to certain individuals. . . . Let none of you therefore be ignorant of this fact, but let each clearly understand it, that when he comes into the court to decide a prosecution for violation of the laws, on that very same day he is about to pass a decision respecting his own freedom of speech.”

There was a standing charge against Demosthenes of having fled from the battle-field, and Æschines revives it repeatedly in the



course of his argument, sometimes in a direct assertion, sometimes only in the form of an allusion, as in the sentence: "As each of you would be ashamed to abandon the post, where he may have been stationed in the field, so now be ashamed to desert the position where you have been stationed by the laws, as the defenders of the democracy on this day." One of the most striking features of this speech is the care with which Æschines tries to anticipate the answer of Demosthenes. He had two very strong reasons for this line—the great eloquence of his rival, and the fact that he himself had not the right of reply. A few passages will be sufficient for the purpose of illustration, and also as an indication of the legal case against Ctesiphon.

"Remember now the statement previously mentioned, that the legislator directs the persons appointed from the tribes to act as magistrates, after having been approved of before the tribunal. But the Pandionian tribe appointed Demosthenes a magistrate and inspector of works, who has received from the treasury for this purpose nearly ten talents; but another law forbids a responsible magistrate to be crowned. Now you have sworn that you will decide according to the laws; the speaker has proposed to crown a responsible person, not adding 'after he shall

have submitted his accounts to an investigation.' Now, I prove this to be illegal, bringing forward as my testimonies the laws, the decrees, and my opponents. How then could any person more clearly prove that a man has proposed most unlawful measures. Accordingly I will prove this also to you, that he illegally orders the proclamation of the crown to be made in this decree. For the law expressly orders, 'if the council may crown any person, that the proclamation should be made in the council; but if the people, in the assembly, but in no other place.' "

He then has the law read to the court, and also the decree proposed by Ctesiphon, and continues:

" You hear, Athenians, that the legislator orders that the person crowned by the people shall be proclaimed in presence of the people in full assembly in the Pnyx, and nowhere else; but Ctesiphon has appointed it in the theatre, not only transgressing the laws, but changing even the place; and not while the Athenians are assembled, but whilst the new tragedies are being performed; not in presence of the people but in presence of the Greeks, in order that they along with us may know what sort of character we honour. Now after having thus clearly proposed illegal measures, arrayed with Demosthenes, he will use subtleties with the laws; which I shall make clear to you, and point out beforehand, lest you may be insensibly de-

ceived. For they will not be able to say, that the laws do not prohibit that the person crowned by the people should be proclaimed out of the assembly; but they will bring in their defence the Dionysiac law, and they will quote a certain part of the law, deceiving your ears; and they will bring forward a law bearing no relation to the present action, and they will say that in the State there are two laws established concerning proclamations, the one, that which I now bring forward, expressly forbidding a person crowned by the people from being proclaimed out of the assembly; but they will say that there is another law contradictory to this, one which has given a power to make a proclamation of a crown in the theatre during the tragedies 'if the people shall so determine.' They will say that Ctesiphon has proposed his decree according to this law. Against the artifices of these men I shall adduce your laws as my advocates."

And the laws are duly read, by which it is shown that under the annual revision of laws, for which provision has been made, the existence of contradictory statutes is impossible. The strong language employed by both orators when they descend to personalities, may be mentioned as a feature in which the student should imitate neither; but excuse is made for Demosthenes on account of the provocation which he received from his adversary. Other

times, other manners. *Æschines* devotes the greater part of his speech to the political aspect of the decree, calling for the condemnation of *Ctesiphon*, because he had praised the administration of *Demosthenes*, "for all the laws forbid anyone to insert falsehoods in the public decrees. The animus and energy, not to say violence, shown in this part of the attack reveals the chief object of the prosecution. It was not to convict *Ctesiphon*, but to procure the fall of *Demosthenes*. The trial was a duel between the two orators. *Æschines* traversed the whole career of *Demosthenes* with great ability, and his speech abounds in passages of stirring eloquence. But when he quitted the legal ground, where his case was strong, to enlarge upon the political issue, on which *Demosthenes* was ready with a triumphant reply, he gave the advantage to his adversary. *Demosthenes* would probably have won, in any case, because of his own character as the foremost man of Athens, and her ever faithful leader against Philip and the Macedonians.

And now, we proceed to our analysis and summary of what is considered the greatest speech of the greatest orator in the world.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kennedy, Bohn's Classical Library, with permission of Messrs. G. Bell and Sons.

The student will note in the first words of Demosthenes the not unusual practice of the ancients to commence with a prayer.

“ I begin, men of Athens, by praying to every God and Goddess that the same goodwill which I have ever cherished towards the commonwealth and all of you may be requited to me on the present trial. I pray likewise — and this specially concerns yourselves, your religion, and your honour — that the Gods may put it in your minds not to take counsel of my opponent touching the manner in which I am to be heard — that indeed would be cruel — but of the laws and of your oath, wherein (besides the other obligations) it is prescribed that you shall hear both sides alike. This means, not only that you must pass no pre-condemnation, not only that you must extend your goodwill equally to both, but also that you must allow the parties to adopt such order and course of defence as they severally choose and prefer. Many advantages hath Æschines over me in this trial; and two especially, men of Athens. First, my risk in the contest is not the same. It is assuredly not the same for me to forfeit your regard, as for my adversary not to succeed in his indictment. To me — but I will say nothing untoward at the outset of my address. The prosecution however is play to him. My second disadvantage is, the natural disposition of mankind to take pleasure in hearing invective and accusation, and to be annoyed by those who praise themselves. To Æschines

is assigned the part which gives pleasure, that which is (I may fairly say) offensive to all is left for me. And if to escape from this I make no mention of what I have done, I shall appear to be without defence against his charges, without proof of my claims to honour; whereas if I proceed to give an account of my conduct and measures, I shall be forced to speak frequently of myself. I will endeavour then to do so with all becoming modesty; what I am driven to by the necessity of the case will be fairly chargeable to my opponent who has instituted such a prosecution. I think, men of the jury, you will all agree that I as well as Ctesiphon am a party to this proceeding, and that it is a matter of no less concern to me. It is painful and grievous to be deprived of anything, especially by the act of one's enemy; but your goodwill and affection are the heaviest loss precisely as they are the greatest prize to gain. Such being the matters at stake in this cause I conjure and implore you all alike to hear my defence to the charge in that fair manner which the laws prescribe — laws to which their author, Solon, a man friendly to you and to popular rights, thought that validity should be given, not only by the recording of them, but by the oath of you the jurors; not that he distrusted you, as it appears to me, but seeing that the charges and calumnies wherein the prosecutor is powerful, by being the first speaker, cannot be got over by the defendant unless each of you jurors, observing his religious obligation, shall with like favour receive the arguments

of the last speaker and lend an equal and impartial ear to both before he determines upon the whole case. As I am it appears on this day to render an account both of my private life and my public measures, I would fain as in the outset call the Gods to my aid; and in your presence I implore them, first that the goodwill which I have ever cherished towards the commonwealth and all of you may be fully requited to me on the present trial; next that they may direct you to such a decision upon this indictment as will induce to your common honour and to the good conscience of each individual. Had Æschines confined his charge to the subject of the prosecution, I too would have proceeded at once to my justification of the decree. But since he has wasted no fewer words in the discussion of other matters, in most of them calumniating me, I deem it both necessary and just, men of Athens, to begin by shortly adverting to these points that none of you may be induced by extraneous arguments to shut your ears against my defence to the indictment."

This is the whole of what may be properly considered the introduction; and considering the greatness of the occasion and the length of the speech, it is unquestionably brief. A speaker must never forget that at the beginning of his speech the audience cannot fully share his feelings, especially if the question be one of a nature personal to himself. Their

attitude is rather one of curiosity and expectation than of sympathy; and hence it follows that they are impatient under a long introduction which prevents them from getting to the business in hand. Introductions should as a rule be short, if only to avoid the danger of letting any remark fall which might be of a disquieting or controversial character, for nothing should be advanced at this stage but what may presumably command universal assent. At the very beginning after his invocation of the gods, Demosthenes claims the right to adopt his own order and course of defence, against the demand of Æschines who urged the jury to insist on the legal points being taken first. The demand was preposterous, and Æschines himself could hardly expect the jury to entertain it; but he calculated probably that it would embarrass Demosthenes and drive him prematurely into that part of the case. Hence the wisdom of disposing at once of this artfully contrived difficulty. But Demosthenes is not content with removing the difficulty. He makes Æschines responsible for his own discomfiture on this very point, by declaring later: "Had Æschines confined his charge to the subject of the prosecution I too would have proceeded



at once to my justification of the decree." The ingenuity of this is admirable; so, too, is the propriety with which he reminds the jury that Æschines' risk in the case is not equal to his own, and that whereas to Æschines is assigned invective and accusation, the part which gives pleasure to listeners, to him is reserved the odious task of praising himself. To assure the jury that their goodwill and affection would be the heaviest loss precisely as they are the greatest prize to gain, is not too bald a compliment. And the introduction is remarkable throughout for its modesty, and deference to the Court, so that it perfectly fulfils the chief purpose of an introduction, which is to obtain a favourable hearing for the speaker.

When we examine the division which he has made of this subject we find that he selects for treatment first those topics which are most likely to secure him the goodwill of the jury, avoiding the legal questions, where he feels his weakness, till he has made some progress in the good opinion of his hearers. He suggests to the jury that the order which he adopts is unavoidable, thereby concealing its real object: "I deem it both necessary and just, men of Athens, to begin by shortly adverting to these points that none of you may be induced

by extraneous arguments to shut your ears against my defence to the indictment." He sounds the personal note at once, the consummate skill, and discredits the prosecution by a description of its methods.

"The crimes whereof I am accused are many and grievous; for some of them the laws enact heavy — most severe penalties. The scheme of this present proceeding includes a combination of spiteful insolence, insult, railing, aspersion, and everything of the kind, while for the said charges and accusations, if they were true, the State has not the means of inflicting an adequate punishment, or anything like it. . . . If the crimes which he saw me committing against the State were as heinous as he tragically gave out, he ought to have enforced the penalties of the law against them at the time; if he saw me guilty of an impeachable offence, by impeaching and so bringing me to trial before you; if moving illegal decrees, by indicting me for them. For surely if he can prosecute Ctesiphon on my account he would not have forborne to indict myself had he thought he could convict me. In short, whatever else he saw me doing to your prejudice, whether mentioned or not mentioned in his catalogue of slander, there are laws for such things, and punishments, and trials, and judgments, with sharp and severe penalties, all of which he might have enforced against me, and had he done so, had he thus pursued the proper method with me, his charges

would have been consistent with his conduct. But now he has declined the straightforward and just course, avoided all proofs of guilt at the time, and after this long interval gets up, to play his part withal, a heap of accusation, ribaldry, and scandal. Then he arraigns me, but prosecutes the defendant. His hatred of me makes the prominent part of the whole context; yet, without ever having met me upon that ground, he openly seeks to deprive a third party of his privileges. Now, men of Athens, besides all the other arguments that may be urged in Ctesiphon's behalf, this methinks may very fairly be alleged, that we should try our own quarrel by ourselves; not leave our private dispute and try what third party we can damage."

The orator follows here with a brilliant historical sketch of the condition of Greece when he entered public life, and of the difficulties under which the Athenians laboured in their contest with Philip. He describes his own measures for the defence of the country, and how they were obstructed by Æschines and his accomplices. Referring to the peace which Philip concluded with Athens during the Phocian war he says:

"Observe again, after the State had concluded the peace what line of conduct each of us adopted. Hence you will understand who it was that co-operated in everything with Philip; who that acted in your behalf,

and sought the advantage of the commonwealth. I moved in the Council, that our ambassadors should sail instantly for whatever place they heard Philip was in, and receive his oath; they would not, however, notwithstanding my resolution. What was the effect of this, men of Athens? I will explain. It was Philip's interest that the interval before the oaths should be as long as possible; yours that it should be as short. Why? Because you discontinued all your warlike preparations, not only from the day of swearing the peace, but from the day that you conceived hopes of it; a thing which Philip was from the beginning studious to contrive, believing, rightly enough, that whatever your possessions he might take before the oath of ratification, he should hold securely; as none would break the peace on such account. I, men of Athens, foreseeing and weighing these consequences, moved the decree to sail for whatever place Philip was in, and receive his oath without delay; so that your allies, the Thracians, might be in possession of the places *Æschines* ridiculed just now (*Serrium*, *Myrtium*, and *Ergisce*) at the time of swearing the oaths; and that Philip might not become master of Thrace by securing the posts of vantage, nor provide himself with plenty of money and troops to facilitate his further designs. Yet this decree he neither mentions nor reads."

Æschines was one of the ambassadors, and Demosthenes continuing accuses him of treacherous conduct.

“Notwithstanding that I had passed this decree for the advantage of Athens, not that of Philip, our worthy ambassadors so little regarded it, as to sit down in Macedonia three whole months, until Philip returned from Thrace after entirely subjugating the country; although they might in ten days, or rather in three or four, have reached the Hellespont and saved the fortresses. Such was the first trick of Philip, the first corrupt act of these accursed miscreants in the embassy; for which I avow that I was, and am, and ever will be, at variance with them. But mark another and still greater piece of villainy immediately after. When Philip had sworn to the peace, having secured Thrace through these men disobeying my decree, he again bribes them not to leave Macedonia, until he had got all ready for his expedition against the Phocians. His fear was, if they reported to you his design and preparation for marching, you might sally forth, sail round with your galleys to Thermopylæ as before, and block up the strait: his desire that the moment you received the intelligence from them he should have passed Thermopylæ, and you be unable to do anything. And in such terror and anxiety was Philip lest, notwithstanding he had gained these advantages, if you voted succour before the destruction of the Phocians his enterprise should fail,

he hires this despicable fellow, no longer in common with the other ambassadors but by himself individually, to make that statement and report to you by which every thing was lost."

The orator amply supports his argument with documentary proofs, and the student will see that it serves the double purpose of vindication on the one hand, and accusation on the other. At each stage of his defence Demosthenes is able to show that the accuser and not he is the real criminal. Every one of his strong points is carefully presented in the simplest language, so that it may go straight home. Any expression which might distract attention from his proofs is rigorously excluded; but when they have been fully presented, when they have done their work on the minds of the jurors, he becomes rhetorical and declamatory with overwhelming effect. The following passages are characteristic:

"When you had been deceived by Philip through the agency of these men, who sold themselves in the embassies and reported not a word of truth to you, when the unhappy Phocians had been deceived and their cities destroyed, what followed? The despicable Thessalians and stupid Thebans looked on Philip as a friend, a benefactor, a saviour. He was everything with them, not a syllable would they hear from

anyone to the contrary. You, though regarding his acts with suspicion and anger, still observed the peace; for you could have done nothing alone. The rest of the Greeks, cheated and disappointed like yourselves, gladly observed the peace though they also had in a manner been attacked for a long time. For when Philip was marching about, subduing Illyrians and Triballians and some also of the Greeks, and gaining many considerable accessions of power, and certain citizens of the States (*Æschines* among them) took advantage of the peace to go there and be corrupted; all people then, against whom he was making such preparations were attacked. If they perceived it not, that is another question, no concern of mine. I was for ever warning and protesting, both at Athens and wheresoever I was sent. But the States were diseased; one class in their politics and measures being venal and corrupt, whilst the multitude of private men either had no foresight, or were caught at the bait of present ease and idleness: and all were under some such influence, only they imagined each one that the mischief would not approach themselves, but that by the peril of others they might assure their own safety when they chose. The result I fancy has been that the people, in return for their gross and unseasonable indolence, have lost their liberty. The statesmen who imagined that they were selling everything but themselves discovered that had sold themselves first; for instead of friends as they were named during the period of bribery, they are now called parasites and mis-

creants and the like befitting names. Justly; for no man, O Athenians, spends money for the traitor's benefit, or when he has got possession of his purchase employs the traitor to advise him in future proceedings, else nothing could have been more fortunate than a traitor. But it is not so, it never could be, it is far otherwise. When the aspirant for power has gained his object, he is master also of those that sold it; and then — then I say, knowing their baseness, he loathes and mistrusts and spurns them. Consider only — for though the time of the events is past the time for understanding them is ever present to the wise. Lesthenes was called the friend of Philip for a while, until he betrayed Olynthus; Timolaus for a while, until he destroyed Thebes; Eudicus and Simus of Larissa for a while, until they brought Thessaly under Philip's power. Since then the world has become full of traitors, expelled and insulted and suffering every possible calamity. How fared Aristratus in Sicyon? How Perilaus in Megara? Are they not outcasts? Hence one may evidently see it is the vigilant defender of his country, the strenuous opponent of such men, who secures to you traitors and hirelings, Æschines, the opportunity of getting bribes. Through the number of those that oppose your wishes you are in safety and in pay; for had it depended on yourselves, you would have perished long ago. Much more could I say about those transactions, yet methinks too much has been said already. The fault is my adversary's for having spirited over me the dregs, I may say, of his



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own wickedness and iniquities, of which I was obliged to clear myself to those who are younger than the events. You, too, have probably been disgusted who knew this man's venality before I spoke a word. He calls it friendship indeed, and said somewhere in his speech, 'The man who reproaches me with the friendship of Alexander.' I reproach you with the friendship of Alexander! Whence gotten or how merited? Neither Philip's friend nor Alexander's should I ever call you. I am not so mad, unless we are to call reapers and other hired labourers the friends of those that hire them. That, however, is not so, how could it be? It is nothing of the kind. Philip's hireling I called you once, and Alexander's I call you now."

Demosthenes' mode of dealing with the indictment is particularly worthy of notice. He is careful first of all to throw it into the middle of his speech, thereby assigning to it a subordinate place in his argument. He avoids touching it until the minds of the jurors have been prepared for what he has to say; and when at last he comes to it, the form of the indictment itself enables him to answer the political part of it before taking up the legal questions. Here his task is easy, and he amply justifies that part of Ctesiphon's decree in which he has been praised for his pub-

lic services. His answer to the point of the indictment, that no magistrate should be crowned before he has rendered an account of his administration, is simply a clever evasion, the nature of which is only imperfectly disguised by a multitude of words and phrases. The answer to the point that none should be proclaimed in the theatre at the Dionysian festival is much more plausible. Doubtless the orator felt all along that the men of Athens were not going to condemn their own champion on legal technicalities, and the event proved he was right. The trial was in reality a political one in spirit and purpose, and also in its logical consequences; and the Athenians consulted the interests of the State in acquitting Ctesiphon and sustaining Demosthenes. But our concern is with the form of the argument, not its results. The orator proceeds:

“ I conceive it remains for me to speak of the proclamation and the accounts: for that I acted for the best, that I have throughout been your friend and zealous in your service, is proved abundantly methinks by what I have said already. The most important part of my policy and administration I pass by, considering that I have in regular course to reply to the charge of illegality; and besides, though I am silent as to the rest of my political acts, the knowledge you

all have will serve me equally well. As to the arguments which he jumbled together about the counter-written laws, I hardly suppose you comprehend them; I myself could not understand the greater part. However I shall argue a just case in a straightforward way. So far from saying that I am not accountable, as the prosecutor just now falsely asserted, I acknowledge that I am all my life accountable for what as your statesman I have undertaken or advised; but for what I have voluntarily given to the people out of my own private fortune I deny that I am any day accountable — do you hear, Æschines — nor is any other man, let him even be one of the nine archons. For what law is so full of injustice and inhumanity as to enact that one who has given of his private means, and done an act of generosity and munificence, instead of having thanks, shall be brought before malignants appointed to be the auditors of his liberality? None. If he says there is let him produce it, and I will be content and hold my tongue. But there is none, men of Athens. The prosecutor in his malice, because I gave some of my own money when I superintended the theatre fund, says: ‘The Council praised him before he had rendered his account.’ Not for any matters of which I had an account to render, but for what I spent of my own, you malignant! ‘Oh, but you were a Conservator of Walls,’ says he. Yes, and for that reason was I justly praised, because I gave the sums expended and did not charge them. A charge requires auditing and examining; a donation merits thanks and

praise: therefore the defendant made this motion in my favour."

All this is very eloquent, but very sophistical. It does not touch the essence of the case that a magistrate may not be crowned, no matter for what, until he has passed his official audit, where, according to the law, his whole administration might be inquired into. A magistrate might be generous with his own money, and still abuse his trust. The law making magistrates accountable was founded on public policy and experience of past maladministration. As Æschines had expressed it,

"In former times certain persons administering the highest offices and managing your revenues and receiving bribes in each of these employments, gaining over the public speakers both from the senate and from the people, anticipated the investigations long beforehand by praises and proclamations, so that in examining the accounts of the magistrates the accusers were involved in the greatest perplexity. For several of the responsible parties having been clearly convicted as plunderers of the public money evaded justice naturally. The judges were ashamed, I think, if the same man should appear in the same State, and perhaps in the very same year to have been lately proclaimed at the festivals as having been honoured by the

people with a golden crown, on account of his integrity and justice, and that the same man should after a short interval depart from the tribunal having incurred an indictment for embezzlement in his accounts."

Demosthenes is able to show from former decrees that others, whom he names, had been crowned before they had rendered their accounts, but these precedents were only so many violations of the law, and not proofs of its non-existence. He boldly asserts at this point: "I have rendered an account of my official acts, not of my bounties." But this was no answer to his opponent's argument, for when Ctesiphon obtained the decree in his favour he had not rendered an account of his official acts. There was an interval of more than seven years between the preferring of the bill of indictment and the trial. The truth is, Demosthenes did not answer his adversary on this point simply because he was unanswerable, though he gave no doubt the best answer he could. Concerning the proclamation in the theatre at the Dionysian festival, he quoted a law in support of the legality of the decree; and there was considerable force in the exclamatory interrogative he addressed to his opponent:

“Are you so perverse and stupid, Æschines, as not to be able to reflect that the party crowned has the same glory from the crown wherever it be published, and that the proclamation is made in the theatre for the benefit of those who confer the crown? For the hearers are thereby all encouraged to render service to the State.”

Wisely dropping the legal questions as soon as possible, Demosthenes here plunges into a personal attack on Æschines, not, however, without some apology for descending to this mode of controversy. He makes a pertinent distinction between abuse and accusation in these words:

“I conceive abuse to differ from accusation in this, that accusation has to do with offences for which the laws provide penalties, abuse with the scandal which enemies speak against each other according to their humour. And I believe our ancestors built these courts, not that we should assemble you here and bring forth the secrets of private life for mutual reproach, but to give us the power of convicting persons guilty of crimes against the State. Æschines knew this as well as I, and yet he chose to rail rather than accuse. Even in this way he must take as much as he gives.”

He retorts on Æschines with a virulence equal at least to that of the attack. As

Æschines had assailed his family and lineage, he in turn assails those of Æschines. How a judicial audience in Athens could tolerate this from either orator is now difficult to understand. The invective which accompanies the recital of the political acts of Æschines is more worthy of the student's attention. But it is in vindicating his own policy that Demosthenes rises to the loftiest heights of eloquence, and displays his marvellous powers of argumentative exposition. The key to his whole conduct is found in his constant efforts to unite the Greeks against Philip, whereas the policy of the latter was to divide and conquer them. The following passages are in his best style:

“ Philip having thus disposed the States towards each other by his contrivances, and being elated by these decrees and answers came with his army and seized Elatea, confident that happen what might you and the Thebans could never again unite. What commotion there was in the city you all know; but let me just mention the most striking circumstances. It was evening. A person came with a message to the presidents that Elatea was taken. They rose from supper immediately, drove off the people from their market-stalls, and set fire to the wicker-frames; others sent for the generals and called the trumpeter, and the

city was full of commotion. The next morning at daybreak the presidents summoned the council to their hall, and you went to the assembly, and before they could introduce or prepare the question the whole people were up in their seats. When the council had entered, and the presidents had reported their intelligence and presented the courier, and he had made his statement, the crier asked, 'Who wishes to speak?' and no one came forward. The crier put the question repeatedly, still no man rose, though all the generals were present and all the orators, and our country with her common voice called for some one to speak and save her; for when the crier raises his voice according to law it may justly be deemed the common voice of our country. If those who desired the salvation of Athens were the proper parties to come forward, all of you and the other Athenians would have risen and mounted the platform, for I am sure you all desired her salvation; if those of greatest wealth, the three hundred; if those who were both friendly to the State and wealthy, the men who afterwards gave such ample donations; for patriotism and wealth produced the gift. But that occasion, that day, as it seems, called not only for a patriot, and a wealthy man, but for one who had closely followed the proceedings from their commencement and rightly calculated for what object and purpose Philip carried them on. A man who was ignorant of these matters, or had not long and carefully studied them, let him be ever so patriotic or wealthy would neither see what measures were needful



nor be competent to advise you. Well then, I was the man called for upon that day. I came forward and addressed you. What I said I beg you for two reasons attentively to hear; first to be convinced that of all your orators and statesmen I alone deserted not the patriot's post in the hour of danger, but was found in the very moment of panic, speaking and moving what your necessities required; secondly, because at the expense of a little time you will gain large experience for the future in all your political concerns. I said, those who were in such alarm under the idea that Philip had got the Thebans with him did not in my opinion understand the position of affairs; for I was sure, had that really been so we should have heard not of his being at Elatea, but upon our frontiers: he was come, however, I knew for certain to make all right for himself in Thebes. 'Let me inform you,' said I, 'how the matter stands; all the Thebans whom it was possible either to bribe or deceive he has at his command; those who have resisted him from the first and still oppose him he can in no way prevail upon; what then is his meaning and why has he seized upon Elatea? He means, by displaying a force in the neighbourhood and bringing up his troops, to encourage and embolden his friends, to intimidate his adversaries, that they may either concede from fear what they now refuse or be compelled. 'Now,' said I, 'if we determine on the present occasion to remember any unkindness which the Thebans have done us and to regard them in the character of enemies with distrust, in

the first place we shall be doing just what Philip would desire; in the next place I fear his present adversaries embracing his friendship and all Philippising with one consent, they will both march against Attica. But if you will hearken to me and be pleased to examine, not cavil at, what I say, I believe it will meet your approval, and I shall dispel the danger impending over Athens. What then do I advise? First, away with your present fear, and rather fear all of ye for the Thebans — they are nearer harm than we are — to them the peril is more immediate; next I say march to Eleusis all the fighting men and cavalry and show yourselves to the world in arms, that your partisans in Thebes may have equal liberty to speak up for the good cause, knowing that as the faction who sell their country to Philip have an army to support them at Elatea, so the party that will contend for freedom have your assistance at hand if they are assailed. Further I recommend you to elect ten ambassadors and empower them in conjunction with the generals to fix the time for going there and for the out-march. When the ambassadors have arrived at Thebes, how do I advise that you should treat the matter? Pray attend particularly to this — ask nothing of the Thebans (it would be dishonourable at this time), but offer to assist them if they require it on the plea that they are in extreme danger and we see the future better than they do. If they accept this offer and hearken to our councils, so shall we have accomplished what we desire, and our conduct will look worthy of the

State should we miscarry they will have themselves to blame for any error committed now, and we shall have done nothing dishonourable or mean.' This and more to the like I spoke, and left the platform. It was approved by all; not a word was said against me. Nor did I make speech without moving, nor make the motion without undertaking the embassy, nor undertake the embassy without prevailing on the Thebans. From the beginning to the end I went through it all, I gave myself entirely to your service to meet the dangers which encompassed Athens. . . .

"It was the duty of a good citizen, if he had any better plan to disclose it at the time, not to find fault now. A statesman and a pettifogger while in no other respect are they alike, in this most widely differ; the one declares his opinion before the proceedings and makes himself responsible to his followers, to fortune, to the times, to all men; the other is silent when he ought to speak; at any untoward event he grumbles. Now, as I said before, the time for a man who regarded the commonwealth and for honest council was then: however I will go to this extent, if anyone now can point out a better course, or indeed if any other was practicable but the one which I adopted, I confess that I was wrong. For if there be any measure now discovered which executed then would have been to our advantage, I say it ought not to have escaped me. But if there is none, if there was none, if none can be suggested even at this day, what was a statesman to do? Was he not to choose the best measures with-

in his reach and view? What did I, Æschines, when the crier asked, 'Who wishes to speak?'—not 'Who wishes to complain about the past, or to guarantee the future?' Whilst you on those occasions sat mute in the assembly I came forward and spoke. However as you omitted then, tell us now; say what scheme that I ought to have devised, what favourable opportunity was lost to the State by my neglect, what alliance was there, what better plan, to which I should have directed the people? But no! The past is with all the world given up, no one even proposes to deliberate about it, the future it is, or the present, which demands the action of a counsellor. At the time, as it appeared, there were dangers impending and dangers at hand. Mark the line of my policy at that crisis; don't rail at the events. The end of all things is what the Deity pleases; his line of policy it is that shows the judgment of the statesman. Do not then impute it as a crime to me that Philip chanced to conquer in battle; that issue depended not on me but on God; prove that I adopted not all measures that according to human calculation were feasible, that I did not honestly and diligently and with exertions beyond my strength carry them out, or that my enterprises were not honourable and worthy of the State and necessary. Show me this and accuse me as soon as you like. But if the hurricane that visited us hath been too powerful, not for us only but for all Greece besides, what is the fair course? As if a merchant after taking every precaution and furnishing his vessel with every-

thing that he thought would ensure her safety, because afterwards he met with a storm and his tackle was strained or broken to pieces, should be charged with the shipwreck! ‘Well, but I was not the pilot,’ he might say, just as I was not the general; fortune was not under my control; all was under hers. Consider and reflect upon this: If, with the Thebans on our side we were destined so to fare in the contest, what was to be expected if we had never had them for allies, but they had joined Philip as he used every effort of persuasion to make them do. And if, when the battle was fought three days’ march from Attica such peril and alarm surrounded the city, what must we have expected if the same disasters had happened in some part of our territory? As it was, do you see, we could stand, meet, breathe; mightily did one, two, three days help to our preservation in the other case — but it is wrong to mention things of which we have been spared the trial by the favour of some deity, and by our protecting ourselves with the very alliance which you assail.

“All this at such length have I addressed to you, men of the jury, and to the outer circle of hearers; for as to this contemptible fellow, a short and plain argument would suffice. If the future was revealed to you, Æschines, alone, when the State was deliberating on these proceedings you ought to have forewarned us at the time. If you did not foresee it, you are responsible for the same ignorance as the rest. Why then do you accuse me on this behalf, rather

than I you? A better citizen have I been than you in respect of the matters of which I am speaking (others I discuss not at present), inasmuch as I gave myself up to what seemed for the general good, not shrinking from any personal danger, nor taking thought of any; whilst you neither suggested better measures (or mine would not have been adopted), nor lent any aid in the prosecuting of mine; exactly what the basest person and worst enemy of the State would do, are you found to have done after the event, and at the same time Aristratus in Naxos and Aristolaus in Thasos, the deadly foes of our State, are bringing to trial the friends of Athens, and Æschines at Athens is accusing Demosthenes. Surely the man who waited to found his reputation upon the misfortunes of the Greeks deserves rather to perish than to accuse another, nor is it possible that one who has profited by the same conjectures as the enemies of the commonwealth can be a wellwisher of his country. You show yourself by your life and conduct, by your political action, and even your political inaction. Is anything going on that appears good for the people? Æschines is mute. Has anything untoward happened, or amiss? Forth comes Æschines, just as fractures and sprains are put in motion when the body is attacked with disease.

“But since he insists so strongly on the event, I will even assert something of a paradox, and I beg and pray of you not to marvel at its boldness but kindly to consider what I say. If then the results had been

foreknown to all, if all had foreseen them, and you, Æschines, had foretold them and protested with clamour and outcry — you that never opened your mouth — not even then should the commonwealth have abandoned her decision, if she had any regard for glory, or ancestry, or futurity. As it is she appears to have failed in her enterprise, a thing to which all mankind are liable if the Deity so wills it; but then, claiming precedency over others, and afterwards abandoning her pretensions, she would have incurred the charge of betraying all to Philip. Why, had we resigned without a struggle that which our ancestors encountered every danger to win, who would not have spit upon you? Let me not say, the commonwealth or myself! With what eyes, I pray, could we have beheld strangers visiting the city if the result had been what it is, and Philip had been chosen leader and lord of all, but other people without us had made the struggle to prevent it; especially when in former times our country had never preferred an ignominious security to the battle for honour! For what Grecian or what barbarian is ignorant, that by the Thebans, or by the Lacedæmonians who were in might before them, or by the Persian king permission would thankfully and gladly have been given to our commonwealth to take what she pleased and hold her own, provided she would accept foreign law and let another power command in Greece? But, as it seems, to the Athenians of that day such conduct would not have been national, or natural, or endurable; none could at

any period of time persuade the commonwealth to attach herself in secure subjection to the powerful and unjust: through every age has she persevered in a perilous struggle for precedency and honour and glory. And this you esteem so noble and congenial to your principles, that among your ancestors you honour most those who acted in such a spirit, and with reason. For who would not admire the virtue of those men who resolutely embarked in their galleys and quitted country and home rather than receive foreign law, choosing Themistocles, who gave such counsel, for their general, and stoning Cyrsilus to death who advised submission to the terms imposed — not him only, but your wives stoning his wife? Yes, the Athenians of that day looked not for an orator or a general, who might help them to a pleasant servitude; they scorned to live if it could not be with freedom. Each of them considered that he was not born to his father and mother only, but also to his country. What is the difference? He that thinks himself born for his parents only waits for his appointed or natural end; he that thinks himself born for his country also, will sooner perish than behold her in slavery, and will regard the insults and indignities which must be borne in a commonwealth enslaved as more terrible than death. Had I attempted to say that I instructed you in sentiments worthy of your ancestors, there is not a man who would not justly rebuke me. What I declare is that such principles are your own; I show that before my time such was the spirit of the common-



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wealth, though certainly in the execution of the particular measures I claim a share also for myself. The prosecutor, arraigning the whole proceedings, and embittering you against me as the cause of our alarms and dangers, in his eagerness to deprive me of honour for the moment, robs you of the eulogies that should endure for ever. For should you, under a disbelief in the wisdom of my policy convict the defendant, you will appear to have done wrong, not to have suffered what befell you through the cruelty of fortune. But never, never can you have done wrong, O Athenians, in undertaking the battle for the freedom and safety of all! I swear it by your forefathers — those that met the peril at Marathon, those that took the field at Platea, those in the sea-fight at Salamis, and those at Artemisium, and many other brave men who repose in the public monuments, all of whom alike as being worthy of the same honour, the country buried, Æschines — not only the successful or victorious! Justly. For the duty of brave men has been done by all; their fortune has been such as the Deity assigned to each."

Whoever has an ear for the rhythm of noble prose, a soul for exalted ideas of duty, or a heart to feel the thrill of courage, of endurance and of self-sacrifice, will admire this splendid oratory in which the wisdom of the statesman, the enthusiasm of the patriot, the eloquence of the advocate, and the righteous indignation of

the great public servant, are happily blended. The remainder of the speech seldom falls below the high level here attained, and the variety of topics introduced to move the jury is rich, I had almost said, to the point of excess; but as the orator frankly declared, the question now was not as to the acquittal of Ctesiphon, of which he had no doubt, but of depriving Æschines of the one-fifth vote, and his consequent banishment from Athens. What can be finer than the following:

“As to this fortification, for which you ridiculed me, of the wall and fosse, I regard them as deserving of thanks and praise, and so they are; but I place them nowhere near my acts of administration. Not with stones nor with bricks did I fortify Athens; nor is this the ministry on which I most pride myself. Would you view my fortifications aright you will find arms, and states, and posts, and harbours, and galleys, and horses, and men for their defence. These are the bulwarks with which I protected Attica, as far as was possible by human wisdom; with these I fortified our territory.”

The same high note carries us on to the peroration, which closes in these words:

“From the very beginning I chose an honest and straightforward course in politics, to support the

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honour, the power, the glory, of my fatherland; these to exalt, in these to have my being. I do not walk about the market-place gay and cheerful because the stranger has prospered, holding out my right hand and congratulating those who I think will report it yonder, and on any news of our own success shudder and groan and stoop to the earth, like these impious men who rail at Athens, as if in so doing they did not rail at themselves; who look abroad, and if the foreigner thrives by the distresses of Greece are thankful for it, and say we should keep him so thriving to all time. Never, O ye Gods, may those wishes be confirmed by you! If possible inspire even in these men a better sense and feeling! But if they are indeed incurable, destroy them by themselves, exterminate them on land and sea; and for the rest of us, grant that we may speedily be released from our present fears and enjoy a lasting deliverance."

We have in Demosthenes great wealth of ideas expressed in the fewest words, a style of concentrated force and beauty, harmonious, vigorous and concise. United to this there is the most felicitous diction, great argumentative power, burning passion, a rich, glowing imagination, and a method which is clear, direct, and coherent, marking altogether the highest order of eloquence to which human speech has yet attained.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CICERO AGAINST CATILINE

**T**HE year of his consulship, 63 B. C., was the supreme one of Cicero's life, in which he earned the title of "Father of His Country" by discovering and destroying a great conspiracy organised by Catiline, which threatened the overthrow of the Republic, in anarchy and bloodshed. There were three candidates for the consulship of this year: Cicero, Antonius Hybrida, and Catiline. Cicero and Antonius were elected. Catiline, who had hoped to accomplish his designs in office, now, finding himself rejected, determined to strike the meditated blow at once; but his plans were betrayed to Cicero, who convened the Senate in the temple of Jupiter Stator that he might lay the information before them. Catiline had the audacity to appear and take his seat among the senators. Cicero denounced him in what is known as the first of the orations against Catiline. These

speeches,<sup>1</sup> which we now propose to examine, possess many of Cicero's characteristic merits, and are comparatively free from the faults of his more florid and diffuse manner. The objects which he proposed to himself, both as orator and man of action, at this crisis, were, to crush the conspiracy and save the Republic, in the first place: and, in the second, to accomplish this if possible without bloodshed. As means to these ends he must make the Romans realise the magnitude of the danger that threatened the State, and, by instilling the conspirators with a wholesome fear of the penalties they had incurred, drive them out of the city. Catiline endeavoured to reply to the first oration, but his voice was drowned by the indignant cries of the Senators, and he fled from the temple, and from Rome, to join the camp of Manlius, then in arms against the Republic. He fell in battle against the other Consul, Antonius Hybrida. It is noteworthy that the first speech begins without any introduction. The orator, seeing the object of his invective actually before him, launches at once into the attack. Any other course in the circumstances would perhaps have been weak

<sup>1</sup> Guthrie, "Orations of Cicero," Scott Library, with permission of Messrs. Walter Scott Ltd.

and ineffective, and might have cooled the public indignation, and emboldened the plotters. Wherefore Cicero bursts forth:

“How far wilt thou, Catiline! abuse our politeness? How long shall thy madness outbrave our justice? To what extremities art thou resolved to push thy unbridled insolence of guilt? Canst thou behold the nocturnal arms that watch the Palatium, the guards of the city, the consternation of the citizens; all the wise and worthy crowding for consultation; this impregnable situation of the seat of the Senate, and the reproachful looks of the fathers of Rome; canst thou, I say, behold all this and remain unabashed? Art thou insensible thy measures are detected? That this Senate, now thoroughly informed, comprehends the whole extent of thy guilt? Point me out the Senator ignorant of your practices during the last and the preceding night; of the place where you met, the company you summoned, and the crime you concerted. The Senate is conscious; the Consul is witness to this; yet, mean and degenerate! the traitor lives. Lives! did I say? He mixes with this Senate; he shares in our counsels; with a steady eye he surveys us; he anticipates his guilt, enjoys the murderous thought and coolly marks us out to bleed. Yet we, boldly passive in our country's cause, think we act like Romans if we can escape his frantic rage.”

Here follow apt instances of great men of former times who suffered death for illegal at-

tacks on the Constitution. Then, further on in the speech, there is a detailed exposure of the plots of the conspirators, by which the Senate is impressed with the imminent peril, and Catiline at the same time is taught the utter hopelessness of his desperate enterprise. The whole speech may be briefly described as a denunciation, an exposure, and a warning, the warning being addressed alternately to the friends and foes of the Commonwealth.

There is an abruptness in many of its parts which leads to the supposition that Cicero was disturbed by the public excitement, and his own anxiety to avoid any measures which might produce a reaction in favour of the conspirators. There is no marked division of the subject for it relates to but one set of circumstances easily comprehended and, like the three following speeches on the same theme, it is comparatively short. Each of the Catiline orations might be delivered in an hour, or a little more, by one of our speakers. If there is no masterly arrangement of matter, there is much ingenuity in the selection and treatment of topics, and a fine energy of expression. The following is, I think, happily conceived:

“Now, O conscript fathers! that I may remove, that I may deprecate from myself, the consequences

of a too well grounded charge urged by my country, attentively I beseech you hear and treasure up in the innermost recesses of your minds and memories what I am now to deliver; for should my country (that country which to me is far dearer than life) should all Italy, should all the frame of this Constitution thus accost me: ‘ Marcus Tullius, will you suffer my approved enemy, him whom you see, who you are sensible is to be put at the head of this impending war, whose presence in their camp my enemies suspect; that spring, that first principle of guilt and treason, the man who enrolls my slaves, who ruins my citizens; will you suffer him, I say, to escape, that he may seem not as driven from, but into the city? Will you not command him to be thrown into fetters, to be dragged to execution, and to atone for his guilt by his blood?

“What restrains thee; the practice of our ancestors? When it has been known that in this State persons uninvested with public authority have often put to death their wicked countrymen. Are you bound up by the Statutes relating to the punishment of Romans? In Rome never can the man who withdraws his allegiance from his country plead the privileges of a Roman. Dost thou dread the reproaches of posterity? A glorious proof of gratitude indeed to thy country, which knowing thee only through thyself, without the merits of ancestors to speak in thy favour, so early raised thee through every gradation of subordinate trust to her supreme seat of power.



Should reproach however keen, should danger however dreadful, render thee remiss when all that is dear to her sons is threatened? But if thou art to dread reproach, art thou to dread it more on account of not being destitute of honesty and courage, than for sloth and pusillanimity? When Italy shall be desolated with war, her towns given up to her foes, and her dwellings wrapt in the flames, think, then think, in what a conflagration of reproach thou thyself must be consumed! To these awful words of my complaining country and of every man who entertains the same sentiments, I thus briefly answer: Had I, conscript fathers, judged it most expedient that Catiline should die, I had not indulged to this trader in murder the respite of a single hour from death. For if the greatest of men and the noblest of Romans appeared not only unpolluted, but even looked lonely in the blood of Saturninus, the Gracchi, and Flaccus, and many other traitors of antiquity, I surely had no reason to dread the indignation of posterity at my destroying this parricide of his country. Yet did I now perceive the storm of future reproach impending over my head I should think, I have ever thought, that reproach on account of public spirit in attempting to blacken the man distinguishes the patriot. But some there are in this assembly who either do not perceive, or are unwilling to own their sense of our approaching ruin; whose lenient measures cherished the hopes of Catiline, and whose incredulity nursed the infancy of his treason. Many, destitute either of wisdom or

virtue, following their authority, would have said that in putting him to death I had acted in a cruel and a regal manner. Now I perceive that should he retire whither he intends (the camp of Manlius) there is not a Roman so stupid as not to see, nor so wicked as not to own, that a conspiracy is formed."

The opening sentences of the second oration illustrate the redundancy which sometimes mars and enfeebles Cicero's oratory, and from which Demosthenes was protected by his purer taste. I will italicise the words which suggest this criticism. The flight of Catiline enables Cicero to take a more tranquil view of the situation in this speech than he could in the first, and the change is noticeable in the tone he now adopts; but some dangerous accomplices yet remain in the city who must be dealt with. The second speech was delivered to the assembly of the people on the day after the delivery of the first to the Senate. Cicero begins:

"At length, then, O Romans! we have driven, *we have despatched and convoyed* into a voluntary retreat from this city, Lucius Catiline, intoxicated with insolence, breathing out guilt, impiously meditating the destruction of his country, and threatening you and this city with all the calamities of fire and sword. He is gone, he is vanished, *he is escaped, he has sallied forth*. No longer now shall that prodigy, that

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monster of men, scheme the ruin of this city while she harbours him in her bosom. This ringleader of rebellion we have doubtless quelled. His dagger is not now pointed at our breasts. Nor shall we now tremble in the field of election, in the forum, in the courts of public justice, or within the walls of domestic retirement. When he was driven from the city he abandoned his post; and now without reserve, as we have no obstacle may we treat him as an open enemy. Great surely must be his perdition and glorious our conquest, since we have forced him out of the character of a bosom-traitor into that of an avowed rebel."

If redundancy of words is a defect, amplification of the subject-matter, as this eloquent passage shows, is a source of power and beauty. There is consummate art in Cicero's mode of announcing Catiline's departure, because in a few sentences he enables his auditors to realise all the blessings which it implies. The speeches, as one naturally expects from the purpose with which they were delivered, are charged with a scorching, withering invective. For example:

"Happy country, could it be drained of the impurities of this city! To me the absence of Catiline alone seems to have given it fresh bloom and beauty. Where is the villainy, where is the guilt that can enter

into the heart and thoughts of man that did not enter into his? In all Italy what prisoner, what gladiator, what robber, what cut-throat, what parricide, what forger, what rascal, what ruffian, what debaucher, is there found among the corrupted, among the abandoned of our country, that did not own an intimate familiarity with Catiline? . . . Would his companions but follow him, would his desperate, his profligate band depart from Rome, well might I pronounce ourselves happy, our country fortunate, and my consulate glorious. For men have now attained to an extravagance in guilt: their crimes appear not now the crimes of men; as they are inhuman so are they intolerable. Murders, burnings, and rapine, now engross their thoughts. Their patrimonies they have squandered; their fortunes they have gormandised; long have they been without money, and now they begin to be without credit, while they retain the rage of desire without the means of enjoyment. Did they in their revels and gambling aim only at the delights of the bowl, their case were indeed desperate; still it might be borne with, but who can suffer that the coward should betray the brave, the witless the wise, the sottish the sober, the indolent the industrious; that lolling at their revels, crowned with garlands, besmeared with ointments, weakened with debauchery, they should belch out in what manner the virtuous are to fall under their swords, and this city to sink in flames? ”

The orator divides the enemies of the Republic into six different classes, each of which is depicted with a graphic power which is scathing and merciless in its severity. He then contrasts with "these gallant forces of Catiline," as he ironically calls them, the defenders of Rome.

"Against these gallant forces of Catiline put now, O Romans! your guards, your garrisons, and your troops in array. And first, to that bruised and battered gladiator oppose your consuls and generals; next, against that expelled, debilitated crew, whose fortunes are shipwrecked, draw out the flower, the strength of all Italy. And now shall the ramparts of your colonies, and your freed cities, be opposed to the woodland, and the rustic works of Catiline."

Cicero, perhaps for want of sufficient evidence had not yet decided upon the arrest of Catiline's confederates who remained in Rome, and he makes one more appeal to their self-interest, at the close of the speech.

"As for those who are left within the city, and left by Catiline for its destruction, and your confusion, though they are enemies, yet still are they our natural fellow-citizens, and as such will I give them my repeated admonitions. If my lenity has hitherto seemed inclinable to weakness, it was with a view that this

latent corruption might be discharged. But now can I no longer forget that this is my native soil, that to these I am consul, that I must spend my life among my countrymen or lay it down for my country. The gate is without a guard, and upon the road lies no ambush; they who incline to depart may do as they think fit; but among those who remain in the city, should any one create, should he attempt, should he so much as seem to aim at the least disturbance, and be discovered by men, he shall be sensible that within these walls are vigilant consuls, active magistrates, keen swords, a brave senate, and a dungeon — that place in which our ancestors thought proper to punish unnatural guilt and avowed rebellion.”

When a few weeks later he addresses his third oration to the assembly of the people these confederates had, by tampering with the commissioners of the Allobroges, delivered themselves into his hands. Cicero’s narrative of their intrigues is a model of what this part of a discourse should be, the importance of which I have discussed in a preceding chapter. After a few introductory remarks on the happy turn of events he gives, in the Third Oration, the following account of the manner in which the conspirators unwittingly furnished evidence against themselves.

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“ All these circumstances as they have already been explained, laid open, and proved by me before the Senate, I will now, Romans, in a few words express to you, that you may be no longer as hitherto, at a loss to comprehend how important and evident they are, by what means traced out, and in what manner discovered. In the first place, ever since Catiline a few days ago broke out of the city, and had left the accomplices of his treason, with the boldest ringleaders of this rebellion at Rome, the end of all my vigilance, of all my care has been, how we might best be secured from such variety of danger, from such a mine of mischief; for when I cast Catiline out of Rome (I now dread no reproach from that word, all I have now to fear is from his being suffered to depart alive) as I aimed at plucking his conspiracy up by the roots, I was in hopes that he would either be followed by the rest of his associate crew, or that they who remained must be disabled and disconcerted through his absence. And as I perceived that the most bold and bloody of all the conspiracy remained here with us and within Rome, my painful endeavours by day and night were, that I might come at the knowledge, the proof of their intentions and actions, that since you could not reconcile the enormity of their guilt to your belief, and therefore were inclined to distrust what I said, I might dispose matters in such a manner as to unite you all in the means of your safety, by proving to your strongest conviction the imminence of your danger. As soon, therefore, as I

found that Publius Lentulus had been tampering with the commissioners of the Allobroges in order to kindle a war beyond the Alps and create commotions in Gaul and that they had been sent to their countrymen, with a commission to communicate on the road their credentials and instructions to Catiline; that Volturcius was sent to attend them, and that they had likewise intrusted him with letters for Catiline, I thought I had now a fair opportunity of giving the most entire satisfaction to myself, to the Senate, and to you, with regard to this conspiracy, a matter of the utmost difficulty and the frequent subject of my fervent prayers to the immortal gods. Yesterday, therefore, I sent praetors, Lucius Flaccus, and Caius Pomptinus, men of great courage and true patriotism. To them I discovered the affair and signified my commands. They, as their sentiments towards their country are all noble and generous, without doubt or delay undertook the business, and about the evening privately repaired towards the Milvian Bridge, where they so disposed themselves in the neighbouring farms, that the Tiber and the bridge lay betwixt them. These likewise drew together to the same ground a great many brave men, unsuspected by any; and I despatched from the prefecture of Reate a number of chosen youths, armed with swords, whose assistance I never fail to make use of in the public service. In the meantime, the third watch being almost spent, the commissioners of the Allobroges, with Volturcius, began to enter upon the bridge with a great retinue,



where our band attacked them. Both parties drew their swords; the prætors alone were in the secret, the others were not. Then upon the coming up of Pomptinus and Flaccus the skirmish ended; and all the letters they had among them were delivered up, sealed as they were, to the prætors, and, their own persons being seized, they were all of them brought before me towards the dawn of day. I summoned before me Cimber Gabinus, that arch plotter in all their wicked conspiracies, without his suspecting how matters went. Lucius Statilius was then brought in, then Cethegus: and then came Lentulus, but a long time after, because I suppose the night before he had sat up unusually late in making out the despatches. When many of the greatest and most considerable men in Rome, upon hearing the news, came to me in the morning, they were of opinion that I should open the letters before I communicated them to the Senate, lest, if nothing was found in them, I should be blamed for too rashly giving so great an alarm to the city. This I refused to comply with, because as the danger was public, so the deliberation upon the affair, untouched as it was, ought to be public likewise. For I considered that even though it should appear I was misinformed, I had no reason to dread any reflections for my over-diligence in matters that bore so dangerous an aspect to the State. I then speedily summoned, as you saw, a full house of the Senate. In the meantime by a hint from the Allobroges, I despatched that brave prætor, Caius Sul-

picius, to remove any arms that might be in the house of Cethegus, from whence he accordingly carried a very great number of swords and daggers. I brought Volturcius, without the Gauls, before the Senate; and by their commands I plighted the public faith to him, exhorting him without fear or reserve to speak freely all he knew. Scarce was he recovered from his fright, when he declared that he had instructions and letters from Lentulus to Catiline, advising him to arm the slaves and march directly up to the city with his army, with this view, that when they had set fire to every quarter of the city, in their several stations and posts as they had been assigned and planned, and had entered upon the general massacre, he might be upon the spot to cut off those who should endeavour to fly and to act in conjunction with these city commanders. And then the Gauls being brought in, declared that an oath had been plighted to themselves, and letters given them to be communicated to their constituents, by Publius Lentulus, Cethegus, and Statilius; and that they had it in commission from them and Lucius Cassius, instantly to despatch their cavalry into Italy, they being in no want of foot; that Lentulus had assured them from the Sibylline predictions and the answers of the Soothsayers, of his being infallibly the third of the name of Cornelius, who was destined to be the sovereign and commander of this city; that the prediction was so far fulfilled in the persons of Sulla and Cinna, both of that name; that he further declared,

this year being the tenth from the acquittal of the vestal virgins, and the twentieth from the burning of the Capitol, was to be the critical period for the destruction of this city and empire. They added to this evidence that there was a dispute between Cethegus and the other conspirators, because some, with Lentulus, were of opinion that the massacre and the burning of the city should be fixed on the Saturnalia, which in Cethegus' opinion was too late. At last, Romans (to be as short as possible), I ordered the letters, which each of them was said to write, to be produced. In the first place I showed to Cethegus his own seal: he owned it to be his: I cut the thread: I read. There it was written with his own hand, 'that he would act by the Senate and the people of the Allobroges, as he had promised to their Commissioners, entreating them to perform whatever their Commissioners should lay before them.' Then Cethegus, who a little before had pretended to excuse himself on account of the swords and daggers found at his house, by saying that he had been ever curious about blades of good metal, upon hearing the letters read, appeared dismayed, confounded, self-convicted, and was suddenly struck dumb. Statilius was then brought in: he owned his hand and seal: his letters, almost to the same purpose as the others, were read to him; he confessed all. I then showed to Lentulus, and demanded if he knew the seal. He seemed to own that he did. 'Right!' said I, 'the seal is well known; it is well known; it is the head of your illustrious

grandfather, whose sole passion was the love of his country and his countrymen; the very sight of it, methinks, of such a head ought to have deterred you from the perpetration of such enormous guilt.' This letter to the same purpose, to the Senate and people of the Allobroges was read. I indulged him in saying what he chose on that subject. At first indeed he stood on his innocence; but soon after the whole information being opened and declared, he rose; he demanded of the Gauls what business he had with them which brought them to his house, and he put the same question to Volturcius. When they answered him in short and unvarying terms by whose means, and how often they had been at his house, and demanded of him in their turn whether he had said nothing to them about the Sibylline predictions; then distracted with guilt, he gave a sudden proof how powerful conscience is; for though he might have braved it out, yet, contrary to what everybody thought, he at once confessed it. Thus not only his ready wit and voluble tongue, for which he was always remarkable, but even his impudence and audacity, in which he has been ever unrivalled, yielded to the force of confounded and detected guilt. But Volturcius on a sudden demands that the letters delivered to him, from Lentulus to Catiline, should be produced and opened. Here though Lentulus was struck with the utmost confusion yet did he own his hand and seal. The letters however were written without any subscription in the following terms:

‘Who I am you will learn from the bearer. Be sure that you act like a man; reflect to what a pass you are now advanced; consider what is necessary for you to do and take care to strengthen yourself with the assistance of all, even the meanest.’ Gabinius was next brought in, and though he at first answered with great impudence, yet in the event he denied none of the circumstances urged against him by the Gauls. And to me, O Romans! though the letters, seals, hands, and lastly, their several confessions, were strong and convincing evidences of their guilt, yet were these evidences rendered still more strong by their looks, their airs, their countenances and their silence. For with such astonishment were they struck, so strongly were their eyes riveted to the ground, and with such guilty consciousness did they sometimes steal a look at one another, that they did not look like men informed against by others but betrayed by themselves.”

Cicero delivered the Fourth Oration before the Senate when the punishment of the conspirators was discussed. Some advised the penalty of death, others, including Julius Caesar, thought that they should be condemned to perpetual imprisonment in exile, and their property confiscated. Cicero, without committing himself to any specific proposal, urged the Senate to punish the offenders without fear of the consequences. The decision was in favour of capital punishment, and orders

were given for the execution of the captives in prison. The following portions of the oration show the drift of his argument:

“Conscript fathers! I cannot dissemble what I hear: some discourse which has reached my ears, has been bandied about among people who seem to fear that I have not strength sufficient to put in execution what you this day decree. That everything, conscript fathers, has been provided, prepared, and settled, is owing much to my indefatigable care and application, but more to the strong inclination which the people of Rome discovered for retaining their imperial sovereignty, and preserving their common interests. Every man of every rank, nay of every age, is now waiting without; the forum is crowded, and all the passages to this house are crowded. For since the building of this city, this is the only case in which the sentiments of the public are unanimous and undivided, except of such as finding their own ruin inevitable choose rather to perish with all than to fall by themselves. Those cheerfully I exclude; those I separate from the rest; those I think are not to be ranked among the number even of degenerate aliens, but inveterate enemies. But, Immortal Gods! for the rest, in what crowds, with what zeal, with what courage, do they unite in their concern and care of the public welfare and dignity! Why need I here mention the Roman knights who though to you they yield the precedence in rank and government yet rival


you in love for their country ; whom, after a difference of many years reconciled to a good understanding and unanimity with this order, the present juncture and the present dangers now cement with you. A conjunction which strengthened under my consulate, if we shall perpetrate in the State, be assured that no civil or domestic calamity shall ever hereafter affect any part of this constitution. With equal zeal in defence of their country do I perceive the brave tribunes of the assembly to be assembled together with all the clerks whom chance had this day fully brought together in the Treasury and whom I now see not intent upon their private interests but upon the public welfare. The whole body of free-born citizens, even the meanest, assists. For to whom among them are not these temples, the view of the city, the enjoyment of liberty, in short, this very light, and this parent soil, not only dear, but pleasant and delightful? It is of importance, conscript fathers, to observe the zeal of those freedmen who having by their merits purchased the freedom of this city look on this country as their own ; whereas some born here and born too to the most distinguished honours regard this not as their country but as a city in the hands of their enemies. But why do I mention those men, and these orders whom private interest, whom the general good, whom, in short, liberty, the dearest object of life, has roused to the preservation of their country? There is not a slave whose condition of life is not intolerable who is not shocked at the ruffian boldness of our coun-

trymen; who does not wish these walls to stand; and who will not contribute whatever he dares, whatever he can, to our endeavours for the common safety. Therefore if any of you are struck with the report that a certain infamous tool of Lentulus runs from shop to shop endeavouring to tempt and corrupt the minds of the needy and the heedless, know that that indeed was begun and attempted; but none were found so wretched in their circumstances, so abandoned in their inclinations, who did not prefer the quiet enjoyment, some of their stall and their labours, and the place where they earned their daily bread, some of their couch and humble bed, and some in short of their peaceful course of life; but the greatest part of those who are shopkeepers, nay in reality I may say that whole rank, loves peace, for all their manufactures, all their works, all their profits are supported by the populousness of the city and nourished by peace. If their profits were diminished by their shops being shut up, what must they be if burned to the ground? If the case stand thus that the guard of the Roman people is not wanting to you, take care that your protection be not wanting to them. You have a consul preserved from many dangers, from many conspiracies, from the jaws of death itself, not on his own account, but for your preservation. All orders unite in opinion, in desire, in zeal, in courage, and in voice to preserve the State. To you your parent country beset with the brands and the weapons of impious conspiracy, as a suppliant, stretches out her hands;



to you, she recommends herself ; to you, the lives of all her sons ; to you, the everlasting fire of Vesta ; to you, all the temples and the altars of the gods ; to you, the battlements and roofs of this city ; this day you are to pass judgment upon your own lives, upon the souls of your wives and children, upon the general interests of all, upon your property and your homes."

The Fourth Oration is a study in parliamentary tactics, for though Cicero was now at the height of his popularity, he deemed it prudent to throw upon the Senate the responsibility of determining the penalty to be awarded to the conspirators, while undertaking, as Consul, to carry out unflinchingly its orders. This is managed with a fine balancing of arguments, which conceals, under an appearance of the utmost impartiality the subtlety of a master of words. His oratorical power is nowhere shown to better advantage than in the skilful manner in which he raises the zeal and public spirit of the Senate by complimenting its members as if their possession of these qualities could not be doubted. The situation was critical and its possibilities unknown ; but the Consul never lost faith in the stability of the constitution, and, by inspiring others with his own confidence, averted its overthrow. Cicero has been censured for the frequency



with which he obtrudes his own personality upon the attention of his hearers, and such a habit is unquestionably one which an orator, on artistic grounds alone, should avoid. Not that it indicates necessarily a want of modesty, but rather an amount of self-consciousness which, though often arising from candour of disposition, is distasteful to others. The orator should always remember the *amour propre* of his audience and suppress his own. I do not think, however, considering the noble and patriotic part which Cicero played in the suppression of the Catiline conspiracy, that he can be charged with a too pronounced egotism for what he says of himself in the concluding portions of the Fourth Oration; and it seems to me his recommendation of his little son to the protection of the Senate, in the event of his own death by violence, is infinitely pathetic, while being, if I may say so, oratorically correct.

Resuming my quotations at the point just broken off I will continue them to the end of this oration without further comment:

“ You have a leader mindful of you, unmindful of himself, a happiness not always to be met with. You have every order, every man, the whole body of the Roman people, unanimous and united in their sen-

timents; a circumstance which in a civil case, before this day, we never knew to happen. Think, think, O Romans! with what toils that empire was reared; on what virtue that liberty was founded; by what munificence of the gods those interests were improved and heightened, which in one night had almost been abolished. This day are you to provide that such treason shall never again be executed, nay, not so much as designed by citizens; and all this have I spoken, not to quicken you (for your zeal has almost got the start of mine) but that my voice which ought to lead in matters of government may appear to have discharged the duty of a consul. Now before I proceed, conscript fathers! to take the sense of the house, I must drop a word with regard to myself: I perceive that I am now to encounter a multitude of enemies, equal to the number of the conspirators, which you see is very great; but these I judge to be scandalous and impotent, deserted and despicable. But if ever through the guilt and frenzy of anyone, that faction shall get the better of your and the public dignity, yet never, conscript fathers! shall I repent of what I have done and of what I have devised. For death, with which they may perhaps menace me, awaits us all; but that pride of life with which I am dignified by your decrees has hitherto been equalled by none. To others have you decreed thanksgivings for the successful management, but to me alone for the auspicious preservation of the republic. All honour be to Scipio; the Scipio whose counsels and courage forced

Hannibal to return to Africa, and to depart from Italy. May every distinguished glory await the name of the Africanus who destroyed Numantia and Carthage, those two cities the inveterate enemies of Roman sway. For ever renowned be Lucius Paulus, whose chariot was graced by the captivity of Perses, a once powerful and glorious monarch. May Marius enjoy immortal honour, who twice delivered Italy from invasion and the dread of slavery. But above all these let Pompey be distinguished, whose actions and virtues are bounded by no other climes or limits than those that regulate the course of the sun. Yet, amidst all their extent of glory, some corner must be reserved for my renown, unless you suppose that there is more merit in opening provinces to which we may retreat, than in taking care that our absent countrymen may have a place to which they may return in triumph. But in one circumstance the consequences of a foreign victory are preferable to those of a domestic, inasmuch as foreign enemies reduced by arms are submissive. If received upon terms they have a grateful sense of the favour; but citizens who, from base degeneracy commence the enemies of their country, if you disappoint them of accomplishing the public ruin, no force can constrain, no kindness can reconcile. I see therefore that I am to wage eternal war with desperate citizens; a war which I hope I shall easily repel from me and mine, through your and every worthy man's assistance; and by the remembrance of so many dangers which must cleave, not

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only to this delivered people, but to the tongues and the minds of every nation on earth. Nor indeed can any power be so formidable as to penetrate and to shake the union of your order with that of the Roman knights, and this perfect harmony of all well-affected citizens. Therefore, conscript fathers! instead of a command; instead of an army; instead of a province; instead of a triumph, and other distinctions of glory, which I slighted, for the preservation of you and this city; instead of my clientships and provincial appointments, which, with my fortune in the city, I labour as much to support as to acquire; for all these services, for all the instances of my zeal for your interest, and for the pains which ye are witnesses I bestow on the preservation of this republic, all I require of you is the commemoration of this juncture and of the whole of my consulate; while that shall remain in your minds I shall think myself surrounded with an impregnable wall. But should my expectation be disappointed by ruffian violence, to you I recommend my little son. Sufficient shall be his guard, not only to preserve but to do him honour, if you shall remember him to be the son of the man who, at his own private peril, preserved you all. Now then, conscript fathers! as you propose, determine with quickness and resolution, in an affair that concerns your very being, and that of the people of Rome; your wives and children, your religion and property, your fanes and temples, the roofs and mansions of all the city, your empire, your liberty, the safety of Italy, and the whole system

of your constitution. You have a consul who without hesitation will obey your orders; and while he breathes will in his own person charge himself with the execution and defence of whatever you shall decree."

Hume justly observes:

"The Grecian orator addressed himself to an audience much less refined than the Roman Senate or judges. The lowest vulgar of Athens were his sovereigns, and the arbiters of his eloquence. Yet is his manner more chaste and austere than that of the Roman. Could it be copied, its success would be infallible over a modern assembly. It is rapid harmony, exactly adjusted to the sense; it is vehement reasoning, without any appearance of art; it is disdain, anger, boldness, freedom, involved in a continued stream of argument: and of all human productions the orations of Demosthenes present to us the models which approach the nearest to perfection."

Cicero is notably inferior to the Greek, in ability to conceal the art which he employs; but he is pre-eminent among Roman orators, as Demosthenes is among those of Greece, and will long be studied for the rich exuberance of his diction, and the elegance of his style. A passage of Longinus containing a brief comparison of Plato, Demosthenes, and Cic-

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ero, I must quote here, from, Mr. Havell's translation: <sup>1</sup>

“ Plato, like the sea, pours forth his riches in a copious and expansive flood. Hence the style of the orator, who is the greater master of our emotions, is often, as it were, red hot and ablaze with passion, whereas Plato, whose strength lay in a sort of weighty and sober magnificence, though never frigid, does not rival the thunders of Demosthenes. And, if a Greek may be allowed to express an opinion on the subject of Latin literature, I think the same difference may be discerned in the grandeur of Cicero as compared with that of his Grecian rival. The sublimity of Demosthenes is generally sudden and abrupt: that of Cicero is equally diffused. Demosthenes is vehement, rapid, vigorous, terrible; he burns and sweeps away all before him; and hence we may liken him to a whirlwind or a thunderbolt: Cicero is like a wide-spread conflagration, which rolls over and feeds on all around it, whose fire is extensive and burns long, breaking out successively in different places, and finding its fuel now here, and now there. Such points, however, I resign to your more competent judgment. To resume, then, the high-strung sublimity of Demosthenes is appropriate to all cases where it is desired to exaggerate, or to rouse some vehement emotion, and generally when we want to carry away our audience with us; we must employ the diffusive style, on the other hand, when we

<sup>1</sup> Longinus *On the Sublime*, Macmillan.

wish to overpower them with a flood of language. It is suitable, for example, to familiar topics, and to perorations in most cases, and to digressions, and to all descriptive and declamatory passages, and in dealing with history or natural science, and in numerous other cases."

The English reader will find the speeches of the Greek and Roman orators in excellent translations.



## CHAPTER IX

### EXAMPLES OF MODERN ORATORY

**N**O educated person can be wholly free from the influence of ancient thought, and ancient forms of expression. We cannot, if we would, separate ourselves from our origins. Life, however, is stronger than language, which it moulds to its own purpose; and the modern spirit breaks through the ancient forms, and finds its own utterance for its peculiar conceptions. English speakers possess, in their own tongue, from the mouths of their own countrymen, a great inheritance of noble oratory. And without entering upon the domain of history, or indulging in lengthened criticism, we shall consider, in this chapter and the next, some examples of modern eloquence. The period consisting of the last quarter of the eighteenth and the opening years of the nineteenth century is the golden age of British eloquence. There have, perhaps, been speakers since as great as any of that period, but never so many simultaneously

as then distinguished themselves in the senate and the forum. Unfortunately they were not well reported, and few of them took the trouble of writing and publishing their speeches. Many of those delivered by Lord Chatham are lost for ever, and the speech with which Sheridan dazzled the House of Commons in the proceedings for the impeachment of Warren Hastings is represented only by a fragment. His second great speech in the actual impeachment, in Westminster Hall, has come down to us, and the student will find it worthy of close study. It was delivered in June, 1778, on the summing up of the evidence relating to the second, or Begum charge, against Hastings. It exhibits not only those great powers of description, of invective, of reasoning, and of exposition, in which Edmund Burke was pre-eminent, but also that playful wit and brilliant fancy with which Sheridan always delighted his hearers, whilst enforcing the serious objects of his discourse. I give a few out of the many illustrative passages which I have marked. Having concluded an elaborate but appropriate introduction the orator continued:

“ I now proceed, my Lords, to review the evidence. The first article which I shall notice must, I think, be considered pretty strong. It is the defence, or rather

the defences, of the prisoner before the House of Commons: for he has already made four: three of which he has since abandoned and endeavoured to discredit. I believe it is a novelty in the history of criminal jurisprudence, that a person accused should first set up a defence, and afterwards try to invalidate it. But this certainly has been the course adopted by the prisoner; and I am the more surprised at it, as he has had the full benefit of the ablest counsel. Rescued from his own devious guidance, I could hardly have imagined that he would have acted so unwisely or indecently, as to evince his contempt of one House of Parliament by confessing the impositions he had practised on the other. But by this extraordinary proceeding, he has given, unwarily, to your lordships a pledge of his past truth, in the acknowledged falsehood of his present conduct. In every court of law in England, the confession of a criminal, when not obtained by any promise of favour or lenity, or by violent threats, is always admitted as conclusive evidence against himself. And if such confession were made before a grave and respectable assembly of persons competent to take cognisance of crimes, there is no doubt but that it would have due weight, because it is fair to presume that it must be voluntary, and not procured by any undue or improper means. The prisoner has in his defence admitted many facts; and it is our intention accordingly to urge in support of the charges his admission of them. For, when he did it he was speaking the language not of inconsiderate

rashness and haste, but of deliberate consideration and reflection, as will appear to your lordships by a passage which I shall cite from the introduction to the defence read by Mr. Hastings himself at the bar of the House of Commons. He employs the following words: 'Of the discouragement to which I allude, I shall mention but two points, and these it is incumbent upon me to mention, because they relate to effects which the justice of this honourable House may, and I trust will, avert. The first is an obligation to my being at all committed in my defence; since in so wide a field for discussion, it would be impossible not to admit some things of which an advantage might be taken to turn them into evidence against myself, whereas *another* might as well use as I could, or better, the same materials of my defence, without involving me in the same consequences. But I am sure the honourable House will yield me its protection against the cavils of unwarranted inference, and if truth can tend to convict me, I am content to be myself the channel to convey it. The other objection lies in my own breast. It was not till Monday last that I formed the resolution, and I knew not then whether I might not, in consequence, be laid under the obligation of preparing and completing in five days (and in effect so it proved) the refutation of charges which it has been the labour of my accuser, armed with all the powers of Parliament, to compile during as many years of undisturbed leisure.' Here then, my Lords, the prisoner has upon deliberation, committed his defence to

paper; and after having five days to consider whether he should present it or not, he actually delivers it himself to the House of Commons as one founded in truth, and triumphantly remarks, that, 'if truth could tend to convict him, he was willing to be himself the channel to convey it.' But what is the language *now* that he has the advice of counsel? Why, that there is not a word of truth in what he delivered to the House of Commons *as* truth! He did not, it seems, himself prepare the defence which he read as his own before that body. He employed others to draw it up. Major Scott comes to your bar, and represents Mr. Hastings, as it were *contracting* for a character, to be made ready to his hands. Knowing, no doubt, that the accusation of the Commons had been drawn up by a committee, he thought it necessary, as a point of punctilio, to answer it by a committee also. For himself, he had no knowledge of the facts! no recollection of the circumstances! He commits his defence wholly to his friends! He puts his memory in trust, and duly nominates and appoints commissioners to take charge of it! One furnishes the raw material of fact, the second spins the argument, and the third turns up the conclusion; while Mr. Hastings with a master's eye, is cheering them on, and overlooking the loom. To Major Scott he says, You have my good faith in your hands; take care of my consistency; manage my veracity to the best advantage! Mr. Middleton, you have my memory in commission! Mr. Shore, make me out a good financier! Remember, Mr. Impey, you

have my humanity in your hands. When this product of their skill was done, he brings it to the House of Commons, and says, 'I was equal to the task. I knew the difficulties but I scorned them: here is the truth, and if the truth tends to convict me, I am content myself to be the channel of it.' His friends hold up their heads and say, 'What noble magnanimity! This *must* be the effect of real innocence!'

Here is Sheridan in a serious vein:

"We have already shown most satisfactorily that the Begums of Oude were of high birth and distinguished rank; the elder, the grandmother of the reigning prince, being the daughter of a person of ancient and illustrious lineage; and the younger, the prince's mother, of descent scarcely less noble. We have also shown, with equal clearness, by the testimony of several witnesses, how sacred is the residence of women in India. To menace, therefore, the dwelling of these princesses with violation, as the prisoner did, was a species of torture, the cruelty of which can only be conceived by those who are conversant with the peculiar customs and notions of the inhabitants of Hindostan. We have nothing in Europe, my Lords, which can give us an idea of the manners of the East. Your Lordships cannot even learn the right nature of the people's feelings and prejudices from any history of other Mohammedan countries — not from that of the Turks, for they are an inferior race in comparison with many of these great families, who, inheriting

from their Persian ancestors, preserve a purer style of prejudice and a loftier superstition. Women there are not as in Turkey — they neither go to the Mosque nor to the bath. It is not the thin veil alone that hides them, but in the inmost recesses of their Zenana, they are kept from public view by those revered and protected walls, which, as Mr. Hastings and Sir Elijah Impey admit, are held sacred even by the ruffian hand of warfare, or the more uncourteous hand of the law. In this situation they are not confined from a mean and selfish policy of man, or from a coarse and sensual jealousy. Enshrined rather than immured, their habitation and retreat is a sanctuary, not a prison: their jealousy is their own, a jealousy of their own honour that leads them to regard liberty as a degradation, and the gaze of even admiring eyes as inexpiable pollution to the purity of their fame and the sanctity of their honour. Such being the general opinion (or prejudices let them be called) of this country, your Lordships will find that whatever treasures were given or lodged in a Zenana of this description must, upon the evidence of the thing itself, be placed beyond the reach of resumption. To dispute with the counsel about the original right of those treasures! To talk of a title to them by the Mohammedan law! Their title to them is the title of a saint to the relics upon an altar placed there by piety, guarded by holy superstition, and to be snatched from thence only by sacrilege. What, now, my Lords, do you think of the tyranny and savage apathy of a man

who could act in open defiance of those prejudices which are so interwoven with the very existence of the females of the East, that they can be removed only by death? What do your Lordships think of the atrocity which could threaten to profane and violate the sanctuary of the Princesses of Oude, by declaring that he would storm it with his troops, and expel the inhabitants from it by force? There is, my Lords, displayed in the whole of this black transaction a wantonness of cruelty, and a ruffian-like ferocity that happily are not often incident even to the most depraved and obdurate of our species. Had there been in the composition of the prisoner's heart one generous propensity, or lenient disposition even slumbering and torpid, it must have been awakened and animated into kindness and mercy towards these singularly interesting ladies. Their character and situation, at the time, presented every circumstance to disarm hostility, and to kindle the glow of manly sympathy; but no tender impression could be made on his soul, which is as hard as adamant and as black as sin. Stable as the everlasting hills in its schemes and purposes of villainy, it has never once been shaken by the cries of affliction, the claims of charity, or the complaints of injustice. With steady and undeviating step he marches on to the consummation of the abominable projects of wickedness which are engendered and contrived in its gloomy recesses. What his soul prepares his hands are ever ready to execute. It is true, my Lords, that the prisoner is conspicuously gifted with



the energy of vice, and the firmness of indurated sensibility. These are the qualities which he assiduously cultivates, and of which his friends vauntingly exult. They have indeed procured him his triumphs and his glories. Truly, my Lords, they have spread his fame, and erected the sombre pyramids of his renown."

The crushing ridicule of the first of these passages, the delicacy of the description of the Zenana of the Princesses, in the second, and the sudden transition to violent denunciation of Mr. Hastings when he has completed the picture of their pious seclusion, strikingly illustrates Sheridan's varied manner, and great oratorical resource. His powerful description of the devastation of the Province of Oude, which occurs in this speech, has been so often quoted that I need only mention it here.

Edmund Burke was leader in the impeachment of Hastings, and he delivered the opening speech of the prosecution, before the Lords. It is impossible to give any idea of the prodigious learning, imaginative splendour, and philosophical wisdom, of this speech by means of extracts. The student should read this and all the speeches of Burke for the vital truth which they contain, and their stimulating, ennobling eloquence. I refer particularly to his speeches in connection with the

impeachment, his speech on Economical Reform, his two speeches on American Conciliation and Taxation, and his speech at Bristol before the election. The last-named is well described by the Rev. F. D. Maurice as "the bravest and wisest ever addressed to an audience of Englishmen, and one which, in the truest sense of the term, our young statesmen should learn by heart." The peroration is singularly noble and beautiful. It was in these words:

"No man carries further than I do the policy of making government pleasing to the people; but the widest range of this politic complacency is confined within the limits of justice. I would not only consult the interests of the people, but I would cheerfully gratify their humours. We are all a sort of children that must be soothed and managed. I think I am not austere or formal in my nature. I would bear—I would even myself play any part in any innocent buffooneries to divert them; but I will never act the tyrant for their amusement. If they will mix malice in their sports, I shall never consent to throw them any living, sentient creature whatsoever, no, not so much as a kitten, to torment.

"But if I profess all this impolitic stubbornness, I may chance never to be elected into Parliament. It is certainly not pleasing to be put out of the public service. But I wish to be a member of Parliament,

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to have my share of doing good and resisting evil. It would therefore be absurd to renounce my objects in order to obtain my seat. I deceive myself, indeed, most grossly if I had not rather pass the remainder of my life hidden in the recesses of the deepest obscurity, feeding my mind even with the visions and imaginations of such things, than to be placed on the most splendid throne of the universe tantalised with the denial of the practice of all which can make the greatest situation any other than the greatest curse. Gentlemen, I have had my day. I can never sufficiently express my gratitude to you for having set me in a place wherein I could lend the slightest help to great and laudable designs. If I have had my share in any measure giving quiet to private property, and private conscience; if, by my vote, I have aided in securing to families the best possession, peace; if I have joined in reconciling kings to their subjects, and subjects to their prince; if I have assisted to loosen the foreign holdings of the citizen, and taught him to look for his protection to the laws of his country, and for his comfort to the goodwill of his countrymen; if I have thus taken my part with the best of men in the best of their actions, I can shut the book. I might wish to read a page or two more; but this is enough for my measure. I have not lived in vain. And now, gentlemen, on this serious day when I come, as it were, to make up my account with you, let me take to myself some degree of honest pride on the nature of the charges that are against me. I do not

here stand before you accused of venality, or of neglect of duty. It is not said that, in the long period of my service, I have, in a single instance, sacrificed the slightest of your interests to my ambition, or to my fortune. It is not alleged that, to gratify any anger, or revenge of my own, or of my party, I have had a share in wronging or oppressing any description of men, or any one man in any description. No! The charges against me are all of one kind, that I have pushed the principles of general justice and benevolence too far; further than a cautious policy would warrant, and further than the opinions of many would go along with me. In every accident which may happen through life — in pain, in sorrow, in depression, and distress — I will call to mind this accusation and be comforted."

If, through neglecting the art of adapting his style to the capacity of his hearers, Burke often failed to win the sympathy of his audience, his oratory remains nevertheless an inexhaustible source of instruction to posterity. No one unacquainted with his writings and speeches can fully know the manifold resources of the English language. His delivery was inferior to that of Chatham, Fox, Pitt, Erskine or Sheridan; but his matter, in wealth of knowledge, in profundity of thought, in amplitude of imagination, in phi-

losophical comprehension, in permanent wisdom, in sublimity of expression, excelled that of all. The two speeches in America are, I think, the most valuable. Let either of them be compared with the greatest of Pitt's—that on the Slave Trade, with the greatest of Fox's—that on the French overtures of Peace, with the greatest we have of Sheridan's—that on the Second Begum Charge, or with the greatest of Erskine's—that in Stockdale's case, and its extraordinary power will be at once evident. Lord Chatham's reputation as an orator, if oratory is to be judged by its immediate power and influence, stands highest of all. It derived its unrivalled force no doubt from his unique personality; and what that was we can imagine from his famous declaration at a great crisis, in 1756: "I am sure that I can save the country, and equally sure that no man else can." The first part of this assertion was amply justified by the vigour and success of his measures, at home and abroad, when power had been placed in his hands. He was one of the few men in English parliamentary history who was able to serve his country without submitting to the control of a party. The speeches which he made in favour of American conciliation are the best known. They were

spontaneous outbursts, in which he announced his conclusions, without leading up to them by argument, but with so much genuine feeling, with such evident sincerity, with such an overwhelming sense of the justice of his cause, and with such splendour of imperious diction, that his hearers were fascinated and enthralled. His is the only great style which may be fairly represented by quotations, for it is concise, direct and conclusive in every part. Someone having spoken of America said "that she was almost in open rebellion;" he exclaimed: "I rejoice that America has resisted. Three millions of people so dead to all the feelings of liberty as voluntarily to let themselves be made slaves, would have been fit instruments to make slaves of all the rest!" Then speaking of the attempt to keep her down:

"In a just cause of quarrel you may crush America to atoms; but in this crying injustice, I am one who will lift up my hands against it; in such a cause even your success would be hazardous. America, if she fell, would fall like the strong man; she would embrace the pillars of the State, and pull down the constitution along with her. Is this your boasted peace? To sheathe the sword, not in its scabbard, but in the bowels of your countrymen!"

Lord Suffolk having said, in reference to the employment of Indians in the American war, that "we were justified in using all the means which God and nature had put into our hands," he rose again and exclaimed:

"I am astonished, shocked, to hear such principles confessed, to hear them avowed in this House or in this country; principles equally unconstitutional, inhuman, and unchristian. My Lords, I did not intend to have trespassed again on your attention, but I cannot repress my indignation. I feel myself impelled by every duty. My Lords, we are called upon, as members of this House, as men, as Christian men, to protest against such notions, standing near the throne, polluting the ear of Majesty. That God and nature put into our hands! I know not what idea that Lord may entertain of God and nature, but I know that such abominable principles are equally abhorrent to religion and humanity. What! attribute the sacred sanction of God and Nature to the massacres of the Indian scalping knife, to the cannibal savage, torturing, murdering, roasting, and eating, literally, my Lords, eating the mangled victims of his barbarous battles! Such horrible notions shock every generous feeling of humanity; and, my Lords, they shock every sentiment of honour; they shock me as a lover of honourable war, and a detester of murderous barbarity. These abominable principles, and this more abominable avowal of them, demand most decisive indignation."

The phrase "decisive indignation" is an unusual combination of terms. "Decisive opposition," we know, and "decisive refutation;" yet the phrase in the text strikes us as a very appropriate one, coming from Lord Chatham, and considering too the subject on which he was speaking. What is obviously dishonourable is not a thing to be argued about, but to be indignantly denounced. And if the indignation is sufficiently emphasised it is decisive. A great deal of Chatham's oratory may be described in his own words. It was decisive indignation. On the question of the expulsion of Wilkes from his seat in the House of Commons he said:

"The Constitution at this moment stands violated. If the breach be effectually repaired, the people will return to tranquillity of themselves. If not let discord reign for ever! I know to what point my language will appear directed. But I have the principles of an Englishman, and I utter them without fear or reserve. Rather than the Constitution shall be tamely given up, and our birthright be surrendered to a despotic minister, I hope, my Lords, old as I am, that I shall see the question brought to an issue and fairly tried between the people and Government."



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Again he said:

“Magna Charta, the Petition of Right, the Bill of Rights, form the Bible of the English Constitution. Had some of the King’s unhappy predecessors trusted less to the Commentary of their advisers, and been better read in the Text itself, the glorious Revolution might have remained only possible in theory, and their fate would not now have stood upon record, a formidable example to all their successors. No man more than I respects the just authority of the House of Commons; no man would go further to defend it. But beyond the line of the Constitution, like every exercise of arbitrary power, it becomes illegal, threatening tyranny to the people, destruction to the State. Power without right is the most detestable object that can be offered to the human imagination. It is not only pernicious to those whom it subjects, but works its own destruction. Under pretence of declaring law, the Commons have made a law, a law for their own case, and have united in the same persons the offices of legislator, and party, and judge.”

William Pitt, the younger, was a finished orator when he made his first speech in Parliament, thanks to the perfect training which he had received from his illustrious father, Lord Chatham. His oratory was characterised most of all by a stately fluency of expression. The copiousness of his vocabulary he

accounted for himself by his habit of translating the ancient classics, of which he was a constant student. He would exercise himself in translating off-hand with the book open before him, in the presence of his father and the rest of the family. The platform, which now exercises so great an influence in the formation of opinion, is quite a modern institution. It was frequently suppressed by law during the eighteenth century, and the right of public meeting was not fully recognised by Parliament until towards the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth. Pitt, who was as zealous for its suppression as Fox was in its defence, spoke twice only outside the House of Commons: and on each occasion very briefly, but with great felicity. On the 28th February, 1784, on receiving the Freedom of the City of London, he said: "I beg to return you my best thanks for your very obliging expressions. Nothing can be more encouraging to me in the discharge of my public duty than the countenance of those whom, from this day, I may have the honour of calling my fellow-citizens." Again, after an interval of twenty-one years, on the 9th of November, 1805, at the Lord Mayor's banquet in the Guildhall, London, he spoke in reply to

the toast of his health as the "Saviour of Europe:" "I return you many thanks for the honour you have done me, but Europe is not to be saved by any single man. England has saved herself by her exertions, and will, I trust, save Europe by her example."

In the session of 1792 Wilberforce moved a resolution in favour of the abolition of the slave trade declaring "that the trade carried on by the British subjects, for the purpose of obtaining slaves on the coast of Africa, ought to be abolished. To this resolution Dundas proposed an amendment to insert the word "gradually" before "abolished." Pitt supported the resolution in a speech which is a fine example of his style. The way in which he turns the arguments of opponents against themselves is a lesson in the art of debate, and the tact which enables him to do this without alienating their sympathy is a notable feature of the performance, which is distinguished throughout by its dignified serenity and high moral courage. The following passage will not be considered too long for insertion here:

"Having detained the House so long, all that I will further add shall relate to that important subject, the civilisation of Africa. Grieved am I to think that there should be a single person in this country who can

look on the present uncivilised state of that continent as a ground for continuing the slave trade — as a ground not only for refusing to attempt the improvement of Africa, but even for intercepting every ray of light which might otherwise break in upon her. Here, as in every other branch of this extensive question, the argument of our adversaries pleads against them; for surely, sir, the present deplorable state of Africa, especially when we reflect that her chief calamities are ascribed to us, calls for our generous aid, rather than justifies any despair on our part of her recovery, and still less any further repetition of our injuries. I will not much longer fatigue the attention of the House; but this point has impressed itself so deeply on my mind, that I must trouble the committee with a few additional observations. Are we justified, I ask, on any ground of theory, or by any one instance to be found in the history of the world from its very beginning to this day, in forming the supposition which I am now combating? Are we justified in supposing that the particular practice which we encourage in South Africa, of men selling each other for slaves, is any symptom of a barbarism that is incurable? Are we justified in supposing that even the practice of offering up human sacrifices proves a total incapacity for civilisation? I believe it will be found that both the trade in slaves, and the still more savage custom of offering up human sacrifices, obtained in former periods throughout many of those nations which now, by the blessing of Providence,

and by a long progression of improvements, are advanced the farthest in civilisation. I believe that if we reflect an instant we shall find that this observation comes directly home to ourselves; and that, on the same ground on which we are now disposed to proscribe Africa for ever from all possibility of improvement, we might in like manner have been proscribed and for ever shut out from all the blessings which we now enjoy. There was a time, sir, when even human sacrifices are said to have been offered in this island. But I would particularly observe on this day, for it is a case precisely in point, that the very practice of the slave trade once prevailed among us. Slaves, as we may read in Henry's *History of Great Britain*, were formerly an established article of our exports. 'Great numbers,' he says, 'were exported like cattle, from the British coast, and were to be seen exposed for sale in the Roman market.' It does not distinctly appear by what means they were procured; but there is unquestionably no small resemblance, in this particular point, between the case of our ancestors and that of the present wretched natives of Africa; for the historian tells you that 'adultery, witchcraft, and debt were probably some of the chief sources of supplying the Roman market with British slaves; that prisoners taken in war were added to the number; and that there might be among them some unfortunate gamblers who after having lost all their goods, at length staked themselves, their wives, and their children.' Every one of these sources of slavery has been stated to be

at this hour a source of slavery in Africa. And these circumstances, sir, with a solitary instance or two of human sacrifices, furnish the alleged proofs that Africa labours under a natural incapacity for civilisation; that it is enthusiasm and fanaticism to think that she can ever enjoy the knowledge and the morals of Europe; that Providence never intended her to rise above a state of barbarism; that Providence has irrevocably doomed her to be only a nursery for slaves, for us free and civilised Europeans. Allow of this principle, as applied to Africa, and I should be glad to know why it might not also have been applied to ancient and uncivilised Britain. Why might not some Roman Senator, reasoning on the principles of some honourable gentleman, and pointing to British barbarians, have predicted with equal boldness — ‘There is a people that will never rise to civilisation; there is a people destined never to be free; a people without the understanding necessary for the attainment of useful arts; depressed by the hand of nature below the level of the human species; and created to form a supply of slaves for the rest of the world.’ Might not this have been said in all respects as fairly and as truly of Britain herself, at that period of her history, as it can now be said by us of the inhabitants of Africa? We, sir, have long since emerged from barbarism; we have almost forgotten that we were once barbarians; we are now raised to a situation which exhibits a striking contrast to every circumstance by which a Roman might have characterised us, and by which we now

characterise Africa. There is, indeed, one thing wanting to complete the contrast, and to clear us altogether from the imputation of acting even to this hour as barbarians; for we continue to this hour a barbarous traffic in slaves; we continue it even yet, in spite of all our great and undeniable pretensions to civilisation. We were once as obscure among the nations of the earth, as savage in our manners, as debased in our morals, as degraded in our understandings, as these unhappy Africans are at present. But in the lapse of a long series of years, by a progression slow, and for a time almost imperceptible, we have become rich in a variety of acquirements, favoured above measure in the gifts of Providence, unrivalled in commerce, pre-eminent in arts, foremost in the pursuits of philosophy and science, and established in all the blessings of civil society; we are in the possession of peace, of happiness and of liberty; we are under the guidance of a mild and beneficent religion; and we are protected by impartial laws, and the purest administration of justice; we are living under a system of government which our own happy experience leads us to pronounce the best and wisest which has ever yet been framed — a system which has become the admiration of the world. From all those blessings we must for ever have been shut out, had there been any truth in those principles which some gentlemen have not hesitated to lay down as applicable to the state of Africa. . . . If, then, we feel that this perpetual confinement in the fetters of brutal ignorance

would have been the greatest calamity which could have befallen us; if we view with gratitude and exultation the contrast between the peculiar blessings we enjoy, and the wretchedness of the ancient inhabitants of Britain; if we shudder to think of the misery which would still have overwhelmed us had Great Britain continued to be the mart for slaves to the more civilised nations of the world, God forbid that we should any longer subject Africa to the same dreadful scourge, and preclude the light of knowledge, which has reached every other quarter of the globe from having access to her coasts."

Burke described Fox as the greatest debater the world ever saw. Not place or power but reputation as a political orator was the object of his ambition, he declared himself in one of his earliest letters to an intimate friend and relation.

To state one by one the arguments of opponents, and one by one reply to them, was the distinguishing characteristic of his method of speaking. There was all the mental agility of the debater in his reply to an elector whom he had canvassed for a vote, and who offered him a halter instead,—“Oh thank you,” said Fox, “I would not deprive you of what is evidently a family relic.” An examination of any one of Fox’s great speeches, the West-



minster Scrutiny, in 1784, the Russian Armament, in 1791, Parliamentary Reform, in 1797, or the speech on the French overtures for peace in 1800, is sufficient to show that his oratorical armoury was more richly furnished with effective weapons than that of his rival. Fox had all the argumentative ignuity of Pitt, and in addition wit, fancy, imagination, satire, humor, pathos, and an emotional warmth which gave to his eloquence an indescribable charm. His chief qualities as a speaker are finely enumerated by Scott in the first Canto of *Marmion*:

Genius high, and lore profound,  
And wit that loved to play, not wound;  
And all the reasoning powers divine  
To penetrate, resolve, combine;  
And feelings keen, and fancy's glow.

Pitt was in office when Napoleon, having overthrown the Directory, became First Consul, and signalled his attainment of supreme power by making proposals of peace to the British Government. In the debate on the resolution of the House rejecting these overtures, Pitt spoke in favour of the continuance of the war, urging that it was impossible to separate the question before them from the

circumstances in which the war originated; or from the crimes and excesses of the Revolution, or from the unstable character of the French Executive which had now developed into "a military despotism." Fox, while deploring the criminal acts of the Revolutionary Government, contended that France should be left to work out her own destiny without external interference, that the powers allied against her were the aggressors, and that the Bourbons whom she drove out had been as unscrupulous in their dealings with foreign States as the revolutionists themselves. In the course of his speech he said:

"I really, sir, cannot think it necessary to follow the right honourable gentleman into all the minute details which he has thought proper to give us respecting the first aggression; but that Austria and Prussia were the aggressors not a man in any country, who has ever given himself the trouble to think at all on the subject, can doubt. Nothing could be more hostile than their whole proceedings. Did they not declare to the French that it was their internal concerns, not their external proceedings, which provoked them to confederate against France. Look back to the proclamations with which they set out. Read the declarations which they made themselves to justify their appeal to arms. They did not pretend to fear

their ambition, their conquests, their troubling their neighbours; but they accused them of new-modelling their own government. They said nothing of their aggressions abroad; they spoke only of their clubs and their societies at Paris. Sir, in all this I am not justifying the French, I am not striving to absolve them from blame, either in their internal or external policy. I think, on the contrary, that their successive rulers have been as bad and as execrable in various instances as any of the most despotic and unprincipled governments that the world ever saw. I think it impossible, sir, that it should have been otherwise. It was not to be expected that the French, when once engaged in foreign wars, should not endeavour to spread destruction around them, and to form plans of aggrandisement and plunder on every side. Men bred in the school of the House of Bourbon could not be expected to act otherwise. They could not have lived so long under their ancient masters without imbibing the restless ambition, the perfidy, and the insatiable spirit of the race. They have imitated the practice of their great prototype and through their whole career of mischief and of crime have done no more than servilely trace the steps of their own Louis XIV. If they have overrun countries and ravaged them, they have done it upon Bourbon principles. If they have ruined and dethroned sovereigns, it is entirely after the Bourbon manner. If they have even fraternised with the people of foreign countries, and pretended to make their cause their own, they have

only faithfully followed the Bourbon example. They have constantly had Louis, the grand monarque, in their eye. But it may be said that this example was long ago, and that we ought not to refer to a period so distant. True, it is a distant period as applied to the man, but not so to the principle. The principle was never extinct; nor has its operation been suspended in France, except, perhaps, for a short period during the administration of Cardinal Fleury; and my complaint against the Republic of France is, not that she has generated new crimes, not that she has promulgated new mischief, but that she has adopted and acted upon the principles which have been so fatal to Europe, under the practice of the House of Bourbon.

. . . Where then, sir, is this war, which on every side is pregnant with horrors, to be carried? Where is it to stop? Not till you establish the House of Bourbon! And this you cherish the hope of doing, because you have had a successful campaign. Why, sir, before this you have had a successful campaign. The situation of the allies, with all they have gained, is surely not to be compared now to what it was when you had taken Valenciennes, Quesnoy, Conte, which induced some gentlemen in this House to prepare themselves for a march to Paris. With all that you have gained, you surely will not say that the prospect is brighter now than it was then. What have you gained but the recovery of a part of what you before lost? One campaign is successful to you — another to them; and in this way, animated by the vindictive

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passions of revenge, hatred, and rancour, which are infinitely more flagitious even than those of ambition and the thirst of power, you may go on for ever; as, with such black incentives, I see no end to human misery. And all this without an intelligible motive, all this because you may gain a better peace a year or two hence! So that we are called upon to go on merely as a speculation. We must keep Buonaparte some time longer at war, as a state of probation. Gracious God, sir, is war a state of probation? Is peace a rash system? Is it dangerous for nations to live in amity with each other? Is your vigilance, your policy, your common powers of observation, to be extinguished by putting an end to the horrors of war? Cannot this state of probation be as well undergone without adding to the catalogue of human sufferings? 'But we must pause.' What! must the bowels of Great Britain be torn out — her best blood be spilt — her treasure wasted — that you may make an experiment? Put yourselves — oh! that you would put yourselves in the field of battle, and learn to judge of the sort of horrors that you excite. In former wars a man might at least have some feeling, some interest, that served to balance in his mind the impressions that a scene of carnage and of death must inflict. If a man had been present at the battle of Blenheim, for instance, and had inquired the motive of the battle, there was not a soldier engaged who could not have satisfied his curiosity and even perhaps allayed his feelings — they were fighting to repress

the uncontrolled ambition of the grand monarque. But if a man were present now at a field of slaughter, and were to inquire for what they were fighting — ‘Fighting!’ would be the answer; ‘they are not fighting, they are pausing.’ Why is this man expiring? Why is that other writhing in agony? What means this implacable fury? The answer must be, ‘You are quite wrong, sir; you deceive yourself — they are not fighting — do not disturb them — they are merely pausing! — this man is not expiring with agony — that man is not dead — he is only pausing! Lord help you, sir, they are not angry with one another; they have now no cause of quarrel — but their country thinks that there should be a pause. All that you see, sir, is nothing like fighting — there is no harm, nor cruelty, nor bloodshed in it whatever — it is nothing more than a *political pause* — it is merely to try an experiment — to see whether Buonaparte will not behave himself better than heretofore; and in the meantime we have agreed to a pause, in pure friendship.’ And is this the way, sir, that you are to show yourselves the advocates of order? You take up a system calculated to uncivilise the world, to destroy order, to trample on religion, to stifle in the heart, not merely the generosity of noble sentiment, but the affections of social nature, and in the prosecution of this system you spread terror and devastation all around you?”

The terrible satire of this passage could not well be excelled, except, perhaps, by the pen of Swift.

During the impeachment of Warren Hastings Mr. Logan, a minister of the Church of Scotland, wrote a pamphlet in his defence, in which he attacked the House of Commons, describing it as a "tribunal of inquisition rather than a court of Parliament." He asserted also that the impeachment was "carried on from motives of personal animosity, not from regard to public justice." A criminal information for libel was filed by the Attorney-General against the publisher of the pamphlet, Mr. Stockdale, and the case was tried in the Court of King's Bench. Erskine's speech for the defence is justly regarded as the finest example of forensic oratory in the history of the English Bar. The great beauty and variety of the advocate's argument needs no commentary, and may be illustrated by a few quotations:

"If your dependencies have been secured, and their interests promoted, I am driven in defence of my client to remark that it is mad and preposterous to bring to the standard of justice and humanity the exercise of a dominion founded upon violence and terror. It may and must be true that Mr. Hastings has repeatedly

offended against the rights and privileges of Asiatic government, if he was the faithful deputy of a power which could not maintain itself for an hour without trampling upon both; he may and must have offended against the laws of God and nature, if he was the faithful viceroy of an empire wrested in blood from the people to whom God and nature had given it; he may and must have preserved that unjust dominion over timorous and abject nations by a terrifying, overbearing, and insulting superiority, if he was the faithful administrator of your government, which, having no rest in consent and affection, no foundation in similarity of interests, nor support from any one principle that cements men together in society, could only be upheld by alternate stratagem and force. The unhappy people in India, feeble and effeminate as they are from the softness of their climate, and subdued and broken as they have been by the knavery and strength of civilisation, still occasionally start up in all the vigour and intelligence of insulted nature: to be governed at all they must be governed with a rod of iron; and our empire in the East would have been long since lost to Great Britain, if civil and military prowess had not united their efforts to support an authority, which Heaven never gave, by means which it can never sanction. Gentlemen, I think I can observe that you are touched with this way of considering the subject; and I can account for it. I have not been considering it through the cold medium of books; but have been speaking of man and his nature, and of



human dominion, from what I have seen of them myself, amongst reluctant nations submitting to our authority. I know what they feel, and how such feelings can alone be repressed. I have heard them in my youth from a naked savage in the indignant character of a prince surrounded by his subjects, addressing the governor of a British colony, holding a bundle of sticks as the notes of his unlettered eloquence. ‘Who is it,’ said the jealous ruler over the desert encroached upon by the restless foot of English adventurers, ‘who is it that causes this river to rise in the high mountains and to empty itself into the ocean? Who is it that causes to blow the loud winds of winter, and that calms them again in the summer? Who is it that rears up the shade of those lofty forests, and blasts them with the quick lightning at his pleasure? The same Being Who gave to you a country on the other side of the waters, gave ours to us; and by this title we will defend it,’ said the warrior, throwing down his tomahawk upon the ground, and raising the war sound of his nation. These are the feelings of subjugated men all round the globe; and, depend upon it, nothing but fear will control where it is vain to look for affection.”

In the various political trials in which Erskine was retained for the defendant it was often his duty to speak on behalf of the Press whose freedom he amply vindicated. In this case he pleaded once more for liberty of pub-

lication, and his efforts were rewarded by the acquittal of his client:

“ From minds subdued [he said] by the terrors of punishment there could issue no works of genius to expand the empire of human reason, nor any masterly compositions on the nature of government, by the help of which the great commonwealths of mankind have founded their establishments; much less any of those useful applications of them to critical conjunctures, by which, from time to time, our own Constitution, by the exertions of patriot citizens, has been brought back to its standard. Under such terrors all the great lights of science and civilisation must be extinguished; for men cannot communicate their free thoughts to one another with the lash held over their heads. It is the nature of everything that is great and useful, both in the animate and inanimate world, to be wild and irregular; and we must be content to take them with the alloys which belong to them, or live without them. Genius breaks from the fetters of criticism; but its wanderings are sanctioned by its majesty and wisdom when it advances in its path: subject it to the critic and you tame it into dulness. Mighty rivers break down their banks in winter, sweeping to death the flocks which are fattened on the soil that they fertilize in the summer. Tempests occasionally shake our dwellings and dissipate our commerce; but they scourge before them the lazy elements which without them would stagnate into pestilence. In like manner

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Liberty herself, the last and best gift of God to His creatures, must be taken just as she is. You might pare her down into bashful regularity, and shape her into a perfect model of severe scrupulous law, but she then would be Liberty no longer; and you must be content to die under the lash of this inexorable justice, which you had exchanged for the banner of freedom."

Orators should vary their topics and their style. You cannot persuade anyone unless your matter is sufficiently interesting to engage his attention. The student will find that the great orators, while exhibiting certain permanent characteristics of their own, in each case, could vary their methods according to the occasion. Lord North's humour must have been very effective, it is so transparently natural. He often indulged in real or apparent slumber; and when an opponent, in the course of an invective, exclaimed: "Even now, in the midst of these perils, the noble lord is asleep," he answered, "I wish to God I was." During the American war he had occasion to announce at a city dinner, the receipt of intelligence of an important advantage gained over the "rebels," and being taken to task by Fox and Colonel Barre for applying the word "rebels" to "our fellow-subjects in America," he replied, "Well, then, to please

you, I will call them the gentlemen in opposition on the other side of the water." The philosophic depth, the polished wit, the stately splendour, of Burke's eloquence are not usually associated in our minds with humour; but even Burke could unbend. Take for example his description of a ministry formed by Lord Chatham:

"He made an administration so checkered and speckled; he put together a piece of joinery so crossly indented and whimsically dovetailed; a cabinet so variously inlaid; such a piece of diversified mosaic; such a tessellated pavement without cement, here a bit of black stone and there a bit of white; patriots and courtiers, king's friends and republicans, Whigs and Tories, treacherous friends and open enemies, that it was indeed a very curious show, but utterly unsafe to touch, and unsure to stand on. The colleagues whom he had associated at the same board stared at each other, and were obliged to ask, 'Sir, your name? Sir, you have the advantage of me; Mr. Such-a-one, I beg a thousand pardons.' I venture to say it did so happen that persons had a single office divided between them, who had never spoken to each other in their lives, until they found themselves, they knew not how, pigging together, heads and points, in the same truckle-bed;"

or his vigorous description of the small and noisy class of politicians, in which wit and humour are so happily mingled:

“Because half a dozen grasshoppers under a fern make the field ring with their importunate chink, while thousands of great cattle beneath the shadow of the British oak chew the cud and are silent, pray do not imagine that those who make the noise are the only inhabitants of the field, that of course they are many in number, or that after all they are other than the little shrivelled, meagre, hopping, though loud and troublesome insects of the hour.”

Townsend, on finding a colleague addressing an almost empty House, advised him to desist, and when the orator refused, declaring that he was speaking to posterity, told him that “if he went on at that rate he would see his audience before him.” No one would describe Brougham’s style of oratory as concise, and yet we find him in 1828 concluding a six hours’ speech on law reform in a few sentences into which he packed a fund of wisdom, expressed in a series of striking antitheses.

“It was [he said] the boast of Augustus — it formed part of the glare in which the perfidies of his earlier years were lost — that he found Rome a city of brick and left it a city of marble; a praise not un-

worthy a great prince, and to which the present reign also has its claims. But how much nobler will be the sovereign's boast when he shall have it to say, that he found law dear and left it cheap; found it a sealed book, left it a living letter; found it the patrimony of the rich, left it the inheritance of the poor; found it the two-edged sword of craft and oppression, left it the staff of honesty and the shield of innocence."

Antithesis is very effective, but according to the taste of the present day it does not admit of frequent use. Contemporary with the orators of the last quarter of the eighteenth century to whom reference has been made, the Irish Parliament contained an equally brilliant company of great speakers, among whom Henry Grattan was the most eminent. To mention the names of Plunket, Curran, and Fitzgibbon (Lord Clare), out of many, is sufficient to recall the fact that the eloquence of the Irish Bar of the same period shone with a lustre in no degree inferior to that of the Bar of England. Grattan's speech on the Declaration of Irish Rights, in 1780, another on the same subject, in 1782, and another against the Union, in 1800 are his best. Plunket's speeches on the Catholic question, Curran's in defence of Hamilton Rowan, in 1794, his speech for Peter Finnerty, in 1797,

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**and Lord Clare's speech in favour of the Union, delivered in the Irish House of Lords on February 10th, 1800, are all full of suggestion to the student of oratory.**

## CHAPTER X

### FURTHER EXAMPLES

**T**HE nineteenth century produced a succession of great orators whose speeches might be advantageously studied in periods, in connection with various agitations of public questions, such as negro slavery, religious equality, parliamentary reform, free trade, taxation, and education, and questions of peace and war, foreign policy, colonial government, land tenure and home rule, all of which were exhaustively debated at various times in Parliament and in the country. Canning, Brougham, Lyndhurst, Stanley, Peel, Shiel and Macaulay, all deserve to be read, at least in part. One has only to glance at a few pages of Macaulay's History to recognise in him the born debater, who, in the speech on copyright and in the speeches on parliamentary reform, displayed his extraordinary gifts before an admiring House of Commons. O'Connell stands apart from all his contemporaries by the unique quality of his eloquence.



No modern orator appears to such disadvantage as he does in the reports of his speeches. He was singularly careless in the choice of words, and, as Shiel graphically expressed it, "he flung a brood of sturdy ideas on the world without a rag to cover them." The student will fail to trace the secret of his power in the reports which have reached us. The best three of the reported speeches are, the speech in favour of Catholic rights, delivered at Dublin in 1814; the defence of Magee; and the speech on Repeal of the Union, before the Dublin Corporation. One hour's listening to O'Connell would afford more instruction in oratory than the perusal of all his speeches, for his diction was only a part, and by no means the greater part, of his art. It was his clarion voice, his persuasive tones, his expressive manner, his alternate strokes of deep pathos, and broad humour, his combativeness, and his commanding presence, that swayed the multitudes who hung upon his words. But though O'Connell has not been adequately reported, for our instruction, he has often been described, and a description by a competent and impartial witness who heard him speak may here be cited. Wendell Phillips,

the celebrated American orator, says in his lecture on O'Connell:

“ Nature intended him for our Demosthenes. Never since the great Greek has she sent forth any one so lavishly gifted for his work as a tribune of the people. In the first place, he had a magnificent presence, impressive in bearing, massive like that of Jupiter. Webster himself hardly outdid him in the majesty of his proportions. . . . There was something majestic in his presence before he spoke; and he added to it what Webster had not, what Clay might have lent — infinite grace — that magnetism that melts all hearts into one. I saw him at over sixty-six years of age; every attitude was beauty, every gesture grace. You could only think of a greyhound as you looked at him; it would have been delicious to have watched him, if he had not spoken a word. Then he had a voice that covered the gamut. The majesty of his indignation, fitly uttered in tones of superhuman power, made him able to ‘indict’ a nation, in spite of Burke’s protest. I heard him once say, ‘I send my voice across the Atlantic, careering like the thunder-storm against the breeze, to tell the slave-holder of the Carolinas that God’s thunderbolts are hot, and to remind the bondman that the dawn of his redemption is already breaking.’ You seemed to hear the tones come echoing back to London from the Rocky Mountains. Then, with the slightest possible Irish brogue, he would tell a story while all Exeter Hall shook with

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laughter. The next moment — tears in his voice like a Scotch song — five thousand men wept; and all the while no effort; he seemed only breathing.

‘ As effortless as woodland nooks  
Send violets up, and paint them blue.’

We used to say of Webster: ‘ This is a great effort;’ of Everett, ‘ it is a beautiful effort;’ but you never used the word effort in speaking of O’Connell. It provoked you that he would not make an effort. I heard him perhaps a score of times, and I do not think he ever, more than three times, lifted himself to the full sweep of his power; and this wonderful power, it was not a thunder-storm; he flanked you with his wit, he surprised you out of yourself. You were conquered before you knew it.”

Oratory, whatever else it may be, whatever form of words it employs, whatever be the ideas it suggests, must be the expression of individual character. If Disraeli, when he first aspired to lead the country gentlemen of England by his eloquence, had tried to model himself on Lord Stanley, or any other member of the Tory party, instead of following the bent of his own genius, he would never have attained the object of his ambition. His strength lay in the mastery of epithet, in epigrammatic phrases, in slashing invective, and

stinging sarcasm. One does not read his speeches, as one may read Sir Robert Peel's or Gladstone's, for an elaborate exposition of the details, or a skilful disposition of the facts, of a great question, but for their ingenious arguments, their polished wit, and their daring ridicule. Mr. Disraeli's description of the exhausted energy of a liberal ministry was in his most characteristic vein:

“As time advanced [said he] it was not difficult to perceive that extravagance was being substituted for energy by the Government. The unnatural stimulus was subsiding. Their paroxysms ended in prostration. Some took refuge in melancholy, and their eminent chief alternated between a menace and a sigh. As I sat opposite the Treasury bench, the Ministers reminded me of one of those marine landscapes not very unusual on the coast of South America. You behold a range of exhausted volcanoes. Not a flame flickers on a single pallid crest. But the situation is still dangerous. There are occasional earthquakes, and ever and anon the dark rumbling of the sea.”

It is not the beauty of the image that is characteristic, but the elegant mockery of the exalted hopes and burning zeal of the opposite party, the patronising compliment of the “eminent chief” mingled with the picture of complete discomfiture “between a menace and

a sigh." His skill in striking the vulnerable point in his adversary was shown in all his encounters with Mr. Lowe. Lowe's weakness as a Liberal was his opposition to the enfranchisement of the working classes. When he opposed the Abyssinian policy of the Tories, "he described not only the fatal influence of the climate," said Disraeli, "but I remember he described one pink fly alone which he said would eat up the whole British Army. He was as vituperative of the insects of Abyssinia as if they had been British workmen." The failure of his maiden effort is an old and familiar story; but the sympathetic advice which he received from Richard Lalor Shiel, is not so well known. Froude mentions it in the biography of Disraeli.

"Get rid of your genius for a session [said Shiel to him], speak often, for you must not show yourself cowed, but speak shortly. Be very quiet; try to be dull; argue imperfectly; astonish them by speaking on subjects of detail; quote figures, dates and calculations. In a short time the House will sigh for the wit and eloquence they know are in you."

He adopted the advice, and when he convinced the House that he could be practical, they allowed him to be brilliant, eloquent, and

entertaining. Mr. Disraeli's attacks on Sir Robert Peel are well known, but his most polished invective belongs to a later period. His speech in opposition to Mr. Gladstone's resolutions upon the Irish Church delivered in the House of Commons on the 3rd of April, 1868, is another good specimen of his style. He is never so happy as in stinging personal allusions, and without these his speeches would be deficient in animation. Referring, in this speech to Viscount Cranborne (Marquis of Salisbury), he said:

“ Perhaps I ought to notice the remarks which were made by the noble lord the member for Stamford. The noble lord saw in this amendment, of which I have given the House the plain history — I say the plain and true history — the noble lord saw in the language of the amendment great cause for mistrust and want of confidence. He saw immediately that we were about to betray the trust with which he deems us to be invested. The noble lord is at no time wanting in imputing to us the being influenced by not the most amiable motives which can regulate the conduct of public men. I do not quarrel with the invective of the noble lord. The noble lord is a man of great talent, and he has vigour in his language. There is great vigour in his invective, and no want of vindictiveness. I admit that, now speaking as a critic and perhaps not as an impartial one, I must say I think it

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wants finish. Considering that the noble lord has studied the subject, and that he has written anonymous articles against me before and since I was his colleague — I do not know whether he wrote them when I was his colleague — I think it might have been accomplished more *ad unguem*.”<sup>1</sup>

The student will note the mass of verbiage with which the speaker purposely surrounds the two points which he wished to make against his opponent; the first, disparaging the opponent's literary execution, as wanting in finish, and the second, conveying the imputation that he was capable of attacking anonymously a fellow-member of the same government. Having thus dealt with Viscount Cranborne, the speaker next referred to Mr. Lowe in a style not unworthy of imitation, for it is full of wit and humour without any admixture of malice.

“Sir, the only objection which I have to these attacks of the noble lord is that they invariably produce an echo from the other side. That, it seems to me, is now almost a parliamentary law. When the bark is heard on this side, the right hon. member for Calne<sup>2</sup> emerges, I will not say from his cave, but perhaps

<sup>1</sup> *To a nicety.*

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Lowe (Lord Sherbrooke).

from a more cynical habitation. He joins immediately in the chorus of reciprocal malignity, and

‘Hails with horrid melody the moon.’

The right hon. gentleman has been extremely analytical upon the amendment of my noble friend — the amendment, that is, of the Government moved by my noble friend; and his zig-zag commentary, founded on the assumption of circumstances that never occurred, and motives that never influenced us, was amusing at the moment. But how far does that commentary agree with the real statement I have given of the cause and origin of this amendment? The right hon. gentleman was extremely exuberant in his comments upon my character and career. I will not trouble the House with a defence of that character and career. I have sat in this House more than thirty years, and can truly say that during that time comments upon my character and career have been tolerably free. But the House has been the jury of my life, and it allows me here now to address it; and therefore this is not the place in which I think it necessary to vindicate myself. The hon. gentleman the member for Calne is a very remarkable man. He is a learned man, though he despises history. He can chop logic like Dean Aldrich, but what is more remarkable than his learning and his logic is that power of spontaneous aversion which particularises him. There is nothing that he likes, and almost everything that he hates. He hates the working classes of Eng-



land. He hates the Roman Catholics of Ireland. He hates the Protestants of Ireland. He hates her Majesty's Ministers. And until the right hon. gentleman the member for South Lancashire<sup>2</sup> placed his hand upon the ark, he seemed almost to hate the right hon. gentleman the member for South Lancashire. But now all is changed. Now we have the hour and the man; but I believe the clock goes wrong, and the man is mistaken."

Mr. Lowe's speeches in the Reform debates of 1866 are very remarkable and very instructive examples of parliamentary eloquence and debating power. They rank with those of Messrs. Gladstone, Bright, and Disraeli delivered at the same period. I do not know what effect they produced on the House of Commons, for I was not yet a member of the House, and Mr. Lowe's delivery, when I heard him some years afterwards, was not equal to the literary excellence of his style. To judge of them solely from the printed page they seem to me to reach the highest standard of oratory. They combine the learning and acuteness of the scholar with the robust common sense of the man of the world, and are distinguished by chastity and sobriety of phrase, nervous vigour, a merciless logic, a

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Gladstone.

keen, brilliant wit, and a mordant humour. Speaking on the first reading of the bill for the extension of the franchise, which he strongly opposed throughout, he said:

“ The franchise is not to be given on an *a priori* principle of justice. This is not a question to be decided *a priori*, or on what a gentleman can evolve from the depths of his inner consciousness. It is a question of practical experience of the working of our laws — one as to the best machinery we can have for the work we have to do. I can well understand how such notions get root among the people. When the common people are told that there is anything to be got, they think that, as in the administration of justice, there should be equality to all. They think the Government ought to distribute everything equally, as if something was to be divided between co-partners. But that is an entire misunderstanding of the real business of a Government. Government does not deal with justice — it deals with expediency. The object is to construct the best machinery for the purpose to which it is to be applied. We may violate any law of symmetry, equality, or distributive justice in providing the proper machinery to enable us to do what is required of us. That being so, I will now state what I think the Government really ought to have done, and which it has not done. As this Bill, though it works on the constituencies, really is a Bill to alter the constitution of the House, and to redistribute

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power in the House, I say it is the bounden duty of the Government to begin their inquiries by a minute examination of the state of this House — to see wherein it has succeeded and wherein it has failed. When that is done, let them still further improve what they find good, if they can do so, and remedy what they find to have failed. . . . The House of Commons will bear comparison with any other assembly for the regularity of its proceedings. It is independent also. Whatever may have happened a hundred years ago, no one will say that there is any personal corruption in the House of Commons now. It is industrious, too. We labour more hours, and get through a greater amount of business than any other assembly in the world. These are great merits. I want to know, will the Bill which the Government have proposed leave all these things as it finds them? Will the constituencies in their altered character have no influence on the House? As the polypus takes its colour from the rock to which it affixes itself, so do the Members of this House take their character from the constituencies. If you lower the character of the constituencies, you lower that of the representatives, and you lower the character of this House. I do not want to say anything disagreeable, but if you want to see the results of democratic constituencies, you will find them in all the assemblies of Australia, and in all the assemblies of North America. But this House, like all human institutions, possesses imperfections, and I will point out one or two of them. In the first place, a

great change has been operating since the year 1832, which no one has noticed, but which, I think, ought to have been taken into consideration. That change is this, that the House of Commons is now much nearer its constituents and much more influenced by them than it was before. In old days, when a man left his constituents, there was a great gulf between him and them, but now the constituents have a second function in addition to electing their Members. They can communicate with them by railway and by telegraph, and sometimes it has happened that the vote of a member has been changed in the course of a debate by a telegram received from his constituents. A measure is sometimes proposed but not fully gone into, and the local press, though insufficiently informed on the question, takes it up and argues upon it, and the result is that the constituents make up their mind on the subject before they have heard the real issue to be raised, and they force their conclusions on their representatives, though these may be far better informed. The less informed tribunal, therefore, acquires more influence than it should over the superior and better informed tribunal. These are small blots, perhaps, but they are worth mentioning, because I want to ask whether more democratic constituencies would be inclined to give their Members more freedom than they have at present? Would they be more tolerant of the opinions of the honest and able man who does not follow the whim of the moment? Would they be more patient, more tolerant, and more inclined to respect

real dignity and consistency of character than they are now?"

On the second reading of the Bill he said:

"Sir, it appears to me we have more and more reason, every day we live, to regret the loss of Lord Palmerston. The remaining members of his Government would seem, by way of a mortuary contribution, to have buried in his grave all their prudence, statesmanship, and moderation. He was scarcely withdrawn from the scene before they set to work to contravene and contradict his policy. That policy, acted upon by a statesman who perfectly understood the wants of the English people, had been crowned with unexampled success, and they, I suppose, must have thought that the best way to secure a continuance of that success was to aim at doing that which he above all other things disapproved. The noble lord at the head of the Government,<sup>1</sup> and the right honourable gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer,<sup>2</sup> have performed a great feat; they have taken the great mass of their supporters, who are, I believe, men of moderate views and moderate opinions, and laid them at the feet of the honourable member for Birmingham.<sup>3</sup> They have thus brought them into contact with men and with principles from which but six short months ago they would have recoiled. That is what

<sup>1</sup> Lord Russell.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Gladstone.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Bright.

has happened to a portion of those who sit upon these benches. As to the rest of us, we are left like sheep in the wilderness, and after the success of this extraordinary combination — to use no harsher word — we who remain precisely what we have been are charged with inconsistency, while the bonds of political allegiance are being strained until they are ready to crack for the purpose of keeping the Liberal party together. We are told that we are bound by every tie which ought to bind mankind, to act in accordance with the policy of Earl Russell; but I, for one, Sir, dispute the justice of that proposition. I have never served under that noble lord. I have served under two prime ministers for a period — I am sorry to say — of little less than ten years. The one was Lord Aberdeen, the other Lord Palmerston. Earl Russell joined the Government of each of those Ministers; both Governments he abandoned, both he assisted to destroy. I owe the noble lord no allegiance. I am not afraid of the people of this country. They have displayed a good sense which is remarkable indeed, when contrasted with the harangues which have been addressed to them. But if I am not afraid of the people, neither do I agree with the right honourable gentleman the member for Huntingdon, in fearing those by whom they are led. Demagogues are the commonplace of history. They are to be found wherever popular commotion has prevailed, and they all bear to one another a strong family likeness. Their names float lightly on the stream of time; they are in

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some way handed down to us, but then they are as little regarded as is the foam which rides on the crest of the stormy wave and bespatters the rock which it cannot shake. Such men, Sir, I do not fear; but I have, I confess, some misgivings when I see a number of gentlemen of rank, of character, of property, and intelligence, carried away without being convinced, or even over-persuaded, in the support of a policy which many of them in their inmost hearts detest and abhor. Monarchies exist by loyalty, aristocracies by honour, popular assemblies by political virtue and patriotism, and it is in the loss of those things, and not in comets and eclipses, that we are to look for the portents that herald the fall of States.

“I have said that I am utterly unable to reason with the Chancellor of the Exchequer for want of a common principle to start from; but there is happily one common ground left to us, and that is the second book of the *Æneid* of Virgil. My right honourable friend, like the moth which has singed its wings in the candle, has returned again to the poor old Trojan horse, and I shall, with the permission of the House, give them one more excerpt from the history of that noble beast, first promising that I shall then turn him out to grass, at all events for the remainder of the Session. The passage which I am about to quote is one which is, I think, worthy the attention of the House, because it contains a description not only of the invading army of which we have heard so much, but also a slight sketch of its general:—

“ ‘ Arduus armatos mediis in moenibus adstans  
Fundit equus, victorque Sinon incendia miscet  
Insultans; portis alii bipatentibus adsunt,  
Millia quot magnis nunquam venere Mycenis.’

In other words: —

“ ‘ The fatal horse pours forth the human tide,  
Insulting Sinon flings his firebrands wide,  
The gates are burst; the ancient rampart falls,  
And swarming millions climb its crumbling walls.’

I have now, Sir, traced as well as I can what I believe will be the natural results of a measure which, it seems to my poor imagination, is calculated, if it should pass into law, to destroy one after another those institutions which have secured for England an amount of happiness and prosperity which no country has ever reached, or is ever likely to attain. Surely the heroic work of so many centuries, the matchless achievements of so many wise heads and strong hands, deserve a nobler consummation than to be sacrificed at the shrine of revolutionary passion, or the maudlin enthusiasm of humanity? But, if we do fall, we shall fall deservedly. Uncoerced by any external force, not borne down by any internal calamity, but in the full plethora of our wealth and the surfeit of our too exuberant prosperity, with our own rash and inconsiderate hands, we are about to pluck down on our own heads the venerable temple of our liberty and our glory. His-



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tory may tell of other acts as signally disastrous, but of none more wanton, none more disgraceful."

The conclusion of the speech which Mr. Lowe delivered on the motion for going into Committee on the bill is a piece of faultless rhetoric, and the touching classic image in the last sentence is very fine:

"The history of this country — the glorious and happy history of this country — has been a conflict between two aristocratic parties, and if ever one should be destroyed, the other would be left face to face with a party not aristocratic, but purely democratic. The honourable member for Birmingham said with great truth the other day, that if the purely aristocratic and the purely democratic elements should come into conflict, the victory would, in all probability, be on the side of Democracy. The annihilation of one of the aristocratic parties — and I know it is in the minds of many, though, of course, it is not openly avowed — would be a folly like that of a bird which, feeling the resistance the air offers to its flight, imagines how well it would fly if there was no air at all, forgetting that the very air which resists it also supports it, and ministers to it the breath of life, and that if it got quit of that air it would immediately perish. So it is with political parties; they not only oppose, they support, strengthen, and invigorate each other, and I shall never, therefore, be a party to an <sup>any</sup> measure, come

from whichever side of the House it may, which seeks so to impair and destroy the balance of parties existing in this country, that whichever party were in office should be free from the check of a vigorous opposition, directed by men of the same stamp and position as those to whom they were opposed. I do not believe that is an object of this Bill which the people of this country will approve, nor do I believe that they wish materially to diminish the influence of honourable gentlemen opposite. There are plenty of gentlemen who do wish it, but I do not believe it is the wish of the country, and therefore I believe they would have looked with much greater satisfaction on the principle of grouping, if it had not been so studiously confined to represented boroughs, and if, instead of first swamping the counties by a low franchise, and then offering the illusory boon of three members, it had relieved the county constituencies of considerable portions of the great towns by an efficient Boundaries Bill, and had erected some of the towns which now almost engross the county representation into distinct constituencies. And while passing by that point, let me say that the provisions with regard to boundaries appear to me to be one of the most delusive parts of the whole Bill, because the effect of them is that no suburbs not now included in the municipal district can be included in the Parliamentary district, unless those who live in these suburbs are content to saddle themselves with municipal taxation. I do not believe the country wishes to see the door to talent shut more

closely than it is, or this House become an assembly of millionaires. I do not believe the country would look with satisfaction on the difference of tone within the House which must be produced if the elements of which it is the result are altered; nor do I believe that it will look with satisfaction on that inevitable change of the Constitution which must occur if these projects are carried into execution — a change breaking the close connection between the executive Government and the House of Commons. I believe sincerely that this House is anxious to put down corruption, and I will say again, at any risk of obloquy, that it is not the way to put down corruption to thrust the franchise into poorer hands. If we are really desirous of achieving this result, there is but one way that I know of, and that is by taking care that you trust the franchise only to those persons whose position in life gives security that they are above the grosser forms of corruption. And if you do prefer to have a lower constituency, you must look the thing in the face — you will be deliberately perpetuating corruption for the sake of what you consider the greater good of making the constituencies larger. These are things which I do not believe the people of this country wish to have. And, therefore, I believe you will be acting in accordance with sound wisdom and the enlightened public opinion of the country by deferring this measure for another year. I press most earnestly for delay. The matter is of inexpressible importance; any error is absolutely irretrievable; it is the last thing in the world

which ought to be dealt with rashly or incautiously. We are dealing not merely with the administration, not merely with a party — no, not even with the Constitution of the kingdom. To our hands at this moment is entrusted the noble and sacred future of free and self-determined government all over the world. We are about to surrender certain good for more than doubtful change; we are about to barter maxims and traditions that have never failed, for theories and doctrines that never have succeeded. Democracy you may have at any time. Night and day the gate is open that leads to that bare and level plain, where every ant's nest is a mountain and every thistle a forest tree. But a Government such as England has, a Government the work of no human hand, but which has grown up the imperceptible aggregation of centuries — this is a thing which we only can enjoy, which we cannot impart to others, and which, once lost, we cannot recover for ourselves. Because you have contrived to be at once dilatory and hasty heretofore, that is no reason for pressing forward rashly and improvidently now. We are not agreed upon details, we have not come to any accord upon principles. To precipitate a decision in the case of a single human life would be cruel. It is more than cruel — it is parricide in the case of the Constitution, which is the life and soul of this great nation. If it is to perish, as all human things must perish, give it at any rate time to gather its robe about it, and to fall with decency and deliberation.

“ ‘ To-morrow!

Oh that's sudden! spare it! spare it!

It ought not so to die.’ ”

No orator ever threw more of his individual character into his speeches than Mr. Gladstone. His energy was prodigious. He distanced all his contemporaries in his marvellous power of work, and there was one part of his oratory which was of supreme excellence—his delivery. I heard him several times for three hours at a stretch without a momentary sensation of fatigue. His voice was rich and musical; his gestures graceful and animated; his vocabulary apparently inexhaustible; his mastery of facts and figures, down to the minutest details, exercised a fascination on the listener; and as he stood before a full House, engaged in some great exposition of national policy, he often appeared to me to be the finest embodiment of mental and physical energy combined that it is possible to conceive. A reader of his speeches, who had never heard him, could have no idea of the impressive personality of the man, or of the action which accompanied his astonishingly exuberant rhetoric. The student who takes up Mr. Disraeli's speeches will notice his deftness of fence, and his pungent, unexpected personal sallies. He

will find these, too, in the utterances of Mr. Gladstone, where they play, though a subordinate, yet sometimes a very effective part. But Mr. Gladstone's power of presenting a large and difficult and complicated case in the clearest light, was his chief glory; and next to this was the skill and force with which he could reply, on the spur of the moment, to any attack on the case he had made. His readiness was never surpassed, and rarely equalled. He could always deal effectively with interruptions, without forgetting for a moment his great courtesy of manner. Let one instance serve as an illustration. He is speaking in a franchise debate, on the second reading, in which he is contending with Mr. Lowe, Viscount Cranborne, Lord Stanley, Mr. Disraeli, and others only less formidable than these:

"It is true that county Members from Ireland are returned by a twelve-pound rating franchise; but I presume we shall not call those persons working men unless they be tenants, and as tenants-at-will they may be more or less under influence, but they can hardly be called working men in the sense we now contemplate." Mr. Disraeli: "There are the forty-shilling freeholders, of whom a great many are working men, in Bucks." Mr. Gladstone: "They are, I appre-

hend, for the most part, like the fly in the pot of ointment. (No, no! from the Opposition). What is the proportion? If we are to carry on the debate in this interlocutory fashion, I would ask what is the proportion of forty-shilling freeholders in the constituency of Bucks?" Mr. Disraeli signified that he would reserve further explanation until he should take part in the debate. Mr. Gladstone: "The right honourable gentleman interpolates questions in the middle of my speech — with perfect relevancy I admit, and I make no complaint of it, if that course be thought convenient; yet, when I invite him to continue the argument in the way he has selected, he declines to follow it."

Referring to Lord Cranborne who, it was well known, was a frequent anonymous contributor to the *Quarterly Review*, he described him as "a very distinguished Member from whose discourses in this House I am afraid the political writers in the *Quarterly Review* have been guilty of the grossest plagiarism on more than one occasion." But his most striking and memorable personal retort was in reply to an accusation made by Mr. Disraeli that he had opposed the Reform Bill of 1832. The passage occurs in what appears to have been his greatest speech on the franchise bill of 1866, that on Lord Grosvenor's motion:

“The right honourable Gentleman, secure, I suppose, in the recollection of his own consistency, has taunted me with the political errors of my boyhood. The right honourable Gentleman, when he addressed the honourable Member for Westminster, took occasion to make a cheap display of magnanimity, for he declared that he would not take the philosopher to task for what he wrote twenty-five years ago. But when he caught one who thirty-five years ago, when just emerged from boyhood, and still an undergraduate of Oxford, had expressed an opinion adverse to the Reform Bill of 1832, of which he had for long years bitterly repented, then the right honourable Gentleman could not resist the temptation that offered itself to his appetite for theatrical effect. He, a Parliamentary champion of twenty years’ standing, and the leader, as he informs us to-night, of the Tory party, is so ignorant of the House of Commons, or so simple in the structure of his mind, that he positively thought he would obtain a Parliamentary advantage by exhibiting me to the public view for reprobation as an opponent of the Reform Bill of 1832. Sir, as the right honourable Gentleman has done me the honour thus to exhibit me, let me for a moment trespass on the patience of the House by exhibiting myself. What he has stated is true. I deeply regret it. But I was bred under the shadow of the great name of Canning; every influence connected with that name governed the first political impressions of my childhood and my youth; following Mr. Canning, I rejoiced in the re-



moval of religious disabilities from the Roman Catholic body, and in the free and truly British tone which he gave to our policy abroad; following Mr. Canning, I rejoiced in the opening he boldly and wisely made towards the establishment of free commercial interchanges between nations; with Mr. Canning, and under the attraction of that great name, and under the influence likewise of the yet more venerable name of Burke, I own that my youthful mind and imagination were impressed with those same idle and futile fears, which still bewilder and distract the mature mind of the right honourable Gentleman. I had conceived that very same fear, that ungovernable alarm at the first Reform Bill, in the days of my undergraduate career at Oxford, which the right honourable Gentleman now feels at the measure before the House; and the only difference between us is this — I thank him for bringing it into view by his quotation — that, having those views, I, as it would appear, moved the Oxford Union Debating Society to express them clearly, plainly, forcibly, in downright intelligible English; while the right honourable Gentleman does not dare to let the nation know what it is that he really thinks, but is content to skulk under the shelter of the meaningless Amendment which is proposed by the noble Lord. And now, Sir, I quit the right honourable Gentleman; I leave him to his reflections; and I envy him not one particle of the polemical advantage which he has gained by his discreet reference to the proceedings of

the Oxford Union Debating Society in the year of grace 1831."

Replying to Mr. Lowe in the same speech, Mr. Gladstone said:

"Now, I come to take a retrospect of this debate. It is natural, it is unavoidable that my attention should first, and in a principal degree, rest on the remarkable speech which we heard yesterday from my right honourable Friend the Member for Calne. With that speech I shall not attempt to deal in detail, and that for many reasons. One of these reasons, perhaps, is a disinclination to measure swords with such a man. (Hear, hear!) That cheer, complimentary as it is, does not, at any rate, precede, but follows, my own admission. A second reason is in my recollections, and a third lies in my hopes, with respect to my right honourable Friend. I cannot forget — although he may — his connection with the men who sit on these Benches. I cannot forget the real services which, as a public man, he has rendered; and while I know of no language strong enough to express the grief — nay, the astonishment — with which I regard his present extraordinary opinions and declarations on the question of Reform, passing, as they seemed to do, beyond those entertained, or at least those avowed, by other Members, yet I think the evident framework of his mind, as well as his recent conduct on other questions, entitles him to this admission at the hands of his party, both that he is pursuing the dictates of his con-

science, and that upon general subjects his judgments are frankly liberal. I only hope that, when he is again doing battle in the ranks, and for the political objects, of those among whom he sits, he may display a little more moderation than he has done in the course of the present struggle. With respect, however, to his speech, I may be permitted to observe upon it in either of two respects. When I look upon it in the light of a great Parliamentary display; when I consider the force of the weapons which he used, the keenness of their edge, and the skill and rapidity of the hand by which they were wielded, I am lost, indeed I was at the time lost, in admiration, though I was myself the object of a fair proportion of the cuts and thrusts which he delivered. But, Sir, when I take another view of that remarkable discourse; when I think of the end and aim to which it was applied — when I remember how shallow, how unworthy, was the exhibition which he gave us of this great and noble Constitution of England, which I, for one, really thought had struck some roots into our soil, and was fixed there in a manner to defy the puny efforts of my Lord Russell and his Colleagues — when I recollect how my right honourable Friend exaggerated more and more as he went on his idle fears and apprehensions, and coloured every object more and more highly in the phantom visions he had conjured up — when I found him travelling back to Australia, his old abode, and on discovering there that the public men of that country had, after all, been simply prose-

cuting in his absence the career which they commenced under his auspices — when he ended with this portentous discovery, that what he called anarchy must be arrested in the colonies by the paramount power of Parliamentary interference from this country, for the purpose of taking away from our fellow-countrymen at the antipodes the powers of self-government which they enjoy — then I confess that the admiration I had felt was lost and swallowed up, I will hardly say in shame, but at the least in grief. Will my right honourable Friend permit me to apply to him the story which is told of the mother of the Regent Duke of Orleans, Elizabeth the Princess Palatine of Bavaria? She said of her son, what I will venture to apply to my right honourable Friend. Her story was, that at his birth the fairies were invited to attend. Each came, and each brought the infant the gift of a talent. But in sending the invitations one fairy had unhappily been forgotten. She came unasked, and said, for her revenge, ‘ Yes, he shall have all the talents except one; that of knowing how, and for what end, to apply them.’ ”

On the general question involved in the extension of the suffrage he said:—

“ And now, Sir, let us for a moment consider the enormous and silent changes which have been going forward among the labouring population. May I use the words to honourable and right honourable Gentlemen once used by way of exhortation by Sir Robert

Peel to his opponents? 'Elevate your vision.' Let us try and raise our view somewhat above the fears, the suspicions, the jealousies, the reproaches, and the recriminations of this place and this occasion. Let us look onward to the time of our children, and of our children's children. Let us examine what preparation it behoves us should be made to meet that coming time. Is there or is there not, I ask, a steady movement discernible in the labouring class, and is or is not that movement a movement onwards, and a movement upwards? I will not say that it falls beneath the eye; for, like all great processes, it is unobservable in detail; but as solid and undeniable, as it is resistless, in its essential character. It is like those movements of the crust of the earth, which science tells us are even now going on in certain portions of the globe. The sailor courses over these regions in his ship, and the traveller crosses them by land, without being conscious of such changes; but from day to day, from hour to hour, the heaving forces are at work, and after a season we discern from actual experience, that the levels are changed by elevation and depression; that things are not as they were. Has my right honourable Friend, in whom mistrust rises to its utmost height, ever really considered the astonishing phenomena connected with some portion of the conduct of the labouring classes, especially in the Lancashire distress? Has he considered what an amount of self-denial was exhibited by these men in respect to the 'American war? They knew that the source of their

distress, of their crushing distress, lay in that war; yet they never uttered or entertained the wish that any effort should be made to put an end to it, as they held it, correctly or erroneously it matters not, to be a war for justice and for freedom. Could any man have believed that a conviction so still, so calm, so firm, so energetic, could have planted itself in the minds of a population, without becoming a known patent fact throughout the whole country? But we knew nothing of it. And yet, when the day of trial came, then we saw that noble sympathy on their part with the people of the North; that determination that, be their sufferings what they might, no word should proceed from them that would hurt a cause which they so firmly believed to be just. On one side, then, there was a magnificent moral spectacle. On the other side was there not also a great lesson to us all, to teach us that in those little tutored, but yet most reflective minds, by a process of quiet instillation, opinions and sentiments gradually form themselves of which we for a long time remain unaware, but which, when at last they make their appearance, are found to be deep-rooted, mature, and ineradicable?

“And now, Sir, I turn to another matter, and I ask my noble Friend how he proposes to administer the government of that singularly associated family of persons, who adopt his Amendment? There ought to be some unity of purpose among those friends and associates, who have linked themselves together on a question such as this; among those who design to over-

turn Governments, or to destroy Reform Bills. I will state a portion of the contradictions that are to be gathered out of this debate on one side only. My noble Friend says we ought to have referred this question to the Committee of Privy Council. But the right honourable Member for the University of Cambridge (Mr. Walpole) tells him, and tells him truly, that it would be totally useless; firstly, it would do no good; and secondly, it would be entirely unconstitutional. That is the first specimen I give. Next, my right honourable Friend (Mr. Walpole) says we ought to have introduced a measure of re-distribution; but the right honourable Gentleman the Member for Stroud, and the honourable Member for Galway, say they would have been content, the one to support our Franchise Bill, and both of them to entertain and discuss it, if only we had said nothing about re-distribution. Again, my honourable Friend, the Member for Wick, says we ought to proceed with the two Bills *pari passu*; but my right honourable Friend, the Member for Cambridge University, says, and supports his opinion with sound reasoning to show, that such a course of proceeding would only involve increased delay. The right honourable Member for Calne again avows, that such a course would remove none of his objections. The right honourable Member for Bucks, I think, says the same; and yet the honourable Member for Wick announces that, if only we will adopt his advice, he will answer for our obtaining every vote on the Liberal side of the House. The honourable

and learned Member for Belfast thinks, that reputation is founded on classes. My right honourable Friend (Mr. Walpole) replies, 'No, it is not founded on classes, but on communities.' The honourable and learned Member for Belfast says fitness is not a ground for enfranchisement; and the right honourable Baronet the Member for Herts proclaims not merely that he would be satisfied, but, with emphatic and expressive gesture, that he would be delighted, if every artisan who is fit for the Franchise could be admitted to it. The noble Lord the Member for Galway (Lord Dunkellin) not only declares his adhesion to Reform, but states that it is in the capacity of an ardent Reformer that he objects to our measure; while the right honourable and gallant General the Member for Huntingdon (General Peel) frames a catalogue of the mischiefs we have had to endure during the Reforming era, and pretty plainly considers that we have had not only enough of Reform in Parliament, but even a little more than enough. The honourable Member for Cambridge holds, I think very truly, that Parliament is pledged in this matter. Not, of course, to do what it may think wrong; nobody ever said anything so absurd; but what is meant is this, that those pledges of Parliament are pledges which, if they are not observed, will cause discredit to Parliament, and will tend to the disparagement of Parliamentary Government with the people of this country. But while my right honourable Friend owns that Parliament is pledged, the honourable Member for Dublin, and the right hon-



ourable Member for Bucks, have laboured to demonstrate that it is under no pledge whatever. Lastly, Sir, the noble Lord, the Member for Haddingtonshire, protests he is an ardent friend of Reform. I will not contradict him; that would not be agreeable to good manners; neither will I even cite against him the words of any other Gentleman. But I will cite his own words and opinions. I conceive that in his judgment — a most untrue and injurious judgment as I think — he has contradicted himself; because, while he has thus declared his friendliness to Reform, he has also avowedly and pointedly, I might almost say ostentatiously, gloried in Lord Palmerston as being a man whose life, if it had only been prolonged, would have effectually kept at bay any new Reform Bill. That, Sir, which I have represented in these references, is the state of self-contradiction among this party; a party gathered together for a chance purpose; with no bond of cohesion, with no declared principle, with no avowed intention; meaning, as I must repeat, one thing and saying another thing; saying that which is of comparatively small account, and not saying, but suppressing, the thing which the most important persons engaged in the operation deeply feel, and which they would wish to say. Such is the state of things among our present opponents. Such is their harmony of language, their unity of view, upon this the first and only occasion on which they have been able to co-operate.

“ Sir, the hour has arrived when this protracted de-

bate must come to an end. (Cheers.) I cannot represent the warmth with which that last expression of mine has been re-echoed. My apologies to the House are sincere. I feel deeply indebted, not to Gentlemen sitting on this side of the House only, but also and not less to honourable Gentlemen opposite, for the patience with which they have heard me. But a very few words more, and I have done. May I speak briefly to honourable Gentlemen on the other side, as some of them have copiously addressed advice to Gentlemen on this side of the House? I would ask them, will you not consider, before you embark in this new crusade, whether the results of those political crusades, in which you have heretofore engaged, have been so satisfactory to you as to encourage you to a new venture in the same direction? Great battles you have fought; and fought them manfully. The battle of maintaining civil disabilities on account of religious belief; the battle of resistance to the first Reform Act; the obstinate and long-continued battle of Protection; all these great battles have been fought by the great party that I now look in the face; and, as to some limited portion of those conflicts, I admit my own share of the responsibility. But I ask again, have their results, have their results towards yourselves, been such as that you should be disposed to renew struggles similar to these? Certainly those, who compose the Liberal party in British politics have, at least in that capacity, no reason or title to find fault. The effect of your course has been to give over to your

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adversaries for five out of every six, or for six out of every seven years, since the epoch of the Reform Act, the conduct and management of public affairs. The effect has been to lower, to reduce, and contract your just influence in the country, and to abridge your legitimate share in the administration of the Government. It is good for the public interest that you also should be strong. But if you are to be strong, you can only be so by showing, in addition to the kindness and the personal generosity which I am sure you feel towards the people, a public, a political trust and confidence in the people. What I now say can hardly be said with an evil motive. I am conscious of no such sentiment towards any man or any party. But, Sir, we are assailed, and with us the Bill, of which we think more seriously than of ourselves. This Bill is in a state of crisis and of peril, and the Government along with it. We stand or fall with it, as has been declared by my noble Friend, Lord Russell. We stand with it now; we may fall with it in a short time. If we do so fall, we, or others in our places, shall rise with it hereafter. I shall not attempt to measure with precision the forces that are to be arrayed against us in the coming issue. Perhaps the great division of tonight is not to be the last, but only the first of a series of divisions. At some point of the contest you may possibly succeed. You may drive us from our seats. You may slay, you may bury, the measure that we have introduced. But we will write upon its grave-

stone for an epitaph this line, with certain confidence in its fulfilment:

‘Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor!’<sup>1</sup>

You cannot fight against the future. Time is on our side. The great social forces which move onwards in their might and majesty, and which the tumult of these debates does not for a moment impede or disturb, those great social forces are against you; they work with us; they are marshalled in our support. And the banner which we now carry in the fight, though perhaps, at some moment of the struggle, it may droop over our sinking heads yet will float again in the eye of heaven, and will be borne by the firm hands of the united people of the three kingdoms, perhaps not to an easy, but to a certain and to a not distant victory.”

The speech delivered by Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons on the 7th day of May, 1877, in favour of the Christian provinces of Turkey, then in revolt, is a fine example of his impassioned manner. The following extract is taken from the conclusion of that speech:

“Sir, there is before us not one controversy, but two. There is the controversy between Russia and Turkey; there is the controversy between Turkey and

<sup>1</sup> Arise! some avenger from our bones!

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her revolted subjects. I think the Government and their supporters out of doors, in the press, are making a great error in this — that it is the first of these two controversies, that between Russia and Turkey, which after all is only symptomatic — to which they address their minds. In my opinion the other is the deeper and more important. The other is a controversy which can have no issue but one, and I do not hesitate to say that the cause of the revolted subjects of Turkey against their oppressors is as holy a cause as ever animated the breast, or as ever stirred the heart of man. Sir, what part are we to play? Looking at this latter controversy — the controversy between Turkey and her subjects — the horrible massacres of last year, the proofs which have been afforded that they are only parts and indications of a system, that their recurrence is to be expected, and is a matter of moral certainty if they are now allowed to pass with impunity — looking at the total want of result from Lord Derby's efforts, at that mockery which has been cast in our teeth, in return for what I quite admit was upon ordinary principles as insulting despatch; can we, Sir, say with regard to this great battle of freedom against oppression which is now going on, which has been renewed from time to time, and for which one third of the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina are at this moment not only suffering exile, but, terrible to say, absolute starvation, upon which depends the fate of millions of the subject races that inhabit the Turkish empire — can we with

all this before us, be content with what I will call a vigorous array of remonstrances, well intended, I grant, but without result, as the policy of this great country? Can we, I say, looking upon that battle, lay our hands upon our hearts, and in the face of God and man, say with respect to it, 'We have well and sufficiently performed our part!'? Sir, there were other days when England was the hope of freedom. Wherever in the world a high aspiration was entertained, or a blow was struck, it was to England that the eyes of the oppressed were always turned — to this favourite, this darling home of so much privilege and so much happiness, where the people that had built up a noble edifice for themselves would, it was well known, be ready to do what in them lay to secure the benefit of the same inestimable boon for others. You talk to me of the established tradition in regard to Turkey. I appeal to the established tradition, older, wider, nobler far — a tradition not which disregards British interests, but which teaches you to seek the promotion of those interests in obeying the dictates of honour and of justice. And, Sir, what is to be the end of this? Are we to identify the fantastic ideas some people entertain about this policy and that policy with British interests, and then fall down and worship them? Or are we to look, not at the sentiment, but at the hard facts of the case, which Lord Derby told us fifteen years ago — namely that it is the *populations* of those countries that will ultimately *determine their* future condition? It is to *this that we should look,*

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and there is now before the world a glorious prize. A portion of those people are making an effort to retrieve what they have lost — I mean those in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Another portion — a band of heroes such as the world has rarely seen — stand on the rock of Montenegro, are ready now, as they have ever been during the four hundred years of their exile from their fertile plain, to meet the Turk at any odds for the re-establishment of justice and of peace in those countries. Another portion still, the five millions of Bulgarians cowed and beaten down to the ground, hardly venturing to look upwards, even to their Father in heaven, have extended their hands to you, they have sent you their petition, they have prayed for your help and protection. They have told you that they do not want alliance with Russia or with any foreign power, but that they want to be delivered from an intolerable burden of woe and shame. That burden of woe and shame — the greatest that exists on God's earth — is one that we thought united Europe was about to remove, that in the Protocol united Europe was pledged to remove, but which for the present you seem to have no efficacious means of contributing to the removal of. But, Sir, the removal of that load of woe and shame is a great and noble prize. It is a prize well worth competing for. It is not yet too late to try to win it. I believe there are men in the Cabinet who would try to win it. It is not yet too late, I say, to become competitors for that prize; but be assured that whether you mean to claim

for yourselves a part of the immortal crown of fame which will be the reward of true labour in that cause, or whether you turn your backs upon that cause and your own duty, I, for one, believe that the knell of Turkish tyranny in those provinces has sounded. It is about to be destroyed, perhaps not in the way or by the means that we should choose; but come the boon from what hands it may, I believe it will be gladly accepted by Christendom and by the world."

The one orator I have known whose speeches will best repay the attention of the student was Mr. John Bright. The purity and simplicity of diction for which his oratory is remarkable forms in my view the best ground-work of a good style: and the persuasive moral force by which his arguments are sustained indicates a sense of personal responsibility in the speaker which cannot be too highly commended. The moral quality, which is present in all great oratory, is conspicuous in the utterances of Mr. Bright. He had not the boundless energy and industry which enabled Mr. Gladstone to grasp so many subjects and speak well upon them all. As he modestly said of himself, for every speech he made, Mr. Gladstone made twenty; but his eloquence was always of the highest order, and in its method it was faultless. Now, what



method? It consisted, first of all, of a clear statement of the facts of his case, in the simplest language. This was followed by the enunciation of fundamental principles, which, according to the view of the Speaker, governed the judgment upon these facts, and determined their relation to right and wrong. Then came the argument and the application of the principles; and the whole was interfused with the glowing colours of a fervid rhetoric, rich in illustration, abounding in stirring invective, or pleasing eulogy, as the mood and the subject demanded, and fired by some great purpose to exalt a nation or enlarge the happiness of mankind. His speeches on the American Civil war were, I think, the most eloquent he delivered; but his beautiful allusion to the "Angel of Death" in the debate on the Crimean war has made the speech of that occasion the most memorable. It was made on Feb. 23, 1855. I quote the conclusion in which, in language of matchless pathos, he pointed out the dreadful effects of the war, and appealed to Lord Palmerston to crown his long career with an act of pacification:

"I have said that I was anxious that the Government of the noble lord should not be overthrown. Will the House allow me to say why I am so? The noble

lord at the head of the Government has long been a great authority with many persons in this country upon foreign policy. His late colleague, the present envoy to Vienna, has long been a great authority with a large portion of the people of this country upon almost all political questions. With the exception of that unhappy selection of an Ambassador at Constantinople, I hold that there are no men in this country more truly responsible for our present position in this war than the noble lord who now fills the highest office in the State, and the noble lord who is now, I trust, rapidly approaching the scene of his labours in Vienna. I do not say this now to throw blame upon those noble lords, because their policy, which I hold to be wrong, they, without doubt, as firmly believe to be right; but I am only stating facts. It has been their policy that they entered into war for certain objects, and I am sure that neither the noble lord at the head of the Government nor his late colleague the noble lord the Member for London will shrink from the responsibility which attaches to them. Well, sir, now we have those noble lords in a position which is, in my humble opinion, favourable to the termination of the troubles which exist. I think that the noble lord at the head of the Government himself would have more influence in stilling whatever may exist of clamour in this country than any other Member of this House. I think, also, that the noble lord the Member for London would not have undertaken the mission to Vienna if he had not entertained some strong

belief that, by doing so, he might bring the war to an end. Nobody gains reputation by a failure in negotiation, and as that noble lord is well acquainted with the whole question from beginning to end, I entertain a hope — I will not say a sanguine hope — that the result of that mission to Vienna will be to bring about a peace, to extricate this country from some of those difficulties inseparable from a state of war.

“There is one subject upon which I should like to put a question to the noble lord at the head of the Government. I shall not say one word here about the state of the army in the Crimea, or one word about its numbers or its condition. Every Member of this House, every inhabitant of this country has been sufficiently harrowed with details regarding it. To my solemn belief, thousands — nay, scores of thousands — of persons have retired to rest, night after night, whose slumbers have been disturbed or whose dreams have been based upon the sufferings and agonies of our soldiers in the Crimea. I should like to ask the noble lord at the head of the Government — although I am not sure if he will feel that he can, or ought to answer the question — whether the noble lord the Member for London has power, after discussions have commenced, and as soon as there shall be good grounds for believing that the negotiations for peace will prove successful, to enter into any armistice? (No, no!)

“I know not, sir, who it is that says ‘No, no’; but I should like to see any man get up and say that the destruction of 200,000 human lives lost on all sides

during the course of this unhappy conflict is not a sufficient sacrifice. You are not pretending to conquer territory, you are not pretending to hold fortified or unfortified towns; you have offered terms of peace which, as I understand them, I do not say are not moderate; and breathes there a man in this House or in this country whose appetite for blood is so insatiable that, even when terms of peace have been offered and accepted, he pines for that assault in which, of Russian, Turk, French, and English, as sure as one man dies, 20,000 corpses will strew the streets of Sebastopol? I say I should like to ask the noble lord — and I am sure that he will feel, and that this House will feel, that I am speaking in no unfriendly manner towards the Government of which he is at the head — I should like to know, and I venture to hope that it is so, if the noble lord the Member for London has power, at the earliest stage of these proceedings at Vienna at which it can properly be done — and I should think that it might properly be done at a very early stage — to adopt a course by which all further waste of human life may be put an end to, and further animosity between three great nations be, as far as possible, prevented?

“I appeal to the noble lord at the head of the Government and to this House; I am not now complaining of the war — I am not now complaining of the terms of peace, nor, indeed, of anything that has been done — but I wish to suggest to this House what, I believe, thousands and tens of thousand of the most

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educated and of the most Christian portion of the people are feeling upon this subject, although, indeed, in the midst of a certain clamour in the country, they do not give public expression to their feelings. Your country is not in an advantageous state at this moment; from one end of the kingdom to the other there is a general collapse of industry. Those Members of this House not intimately acquainted with the trade and commerce of the country do not fully comprehend our position as to the diminution of employment and the lessening of wages. An increase in the cost of living is finding its way to the homes and hearts of a vast number of the labouring population.

“ At the same time there is growing up — and, notwithstanding what some honourable Members of this House may think of me, no man regrets it more than I do — a bitter and angry feeling against that class which has for a long period conducted the public affairs of this country. I like political changes when such changes are made as the result, not of passion, but of deliberation and reason. Changes so made are safe, but changes made under the influence of violent exaggeration, or of the violent passions of public meetings, are not changes usually approved by this House or advantageous to the country. I cannot but notice, in speaking to gentlemen who sit on either side of this House, or in speaking to anyone I meet between this House and any of those localities we frequent when this House is up — I cannot, I say, but notice that an uneasy feeling exists as to the news which may

arrive by the very next mail from the East. I do not suppose that your troops are to be beaten in actual conflict with the foe, or that they will be driven into the sea; but I am certain that many homes in England in which there now exists a fond hope that the distant one may return — many such homes may be rendered desolate when the next mail shall arrive. The Angel of Death has been abroad throughout the land; you may almost hear the beating of his wings. There is no one, as when the first-born were slain of old, to sprinkle with blood the lintel and the two sideposts of our doors, that he may spare and pass on. He takes his victims from the castle of the noble, the mansion of the wealthy, and the cottage of the poor and the lowly, and it is on behalf of all these classes that I make this solemn appeal.

“I tell the noble lord, that if he be ready honestly and frankly to endeavour, by the negotiations about to be opened at Vienna, to put an end to this war, no word of mine, no vote of mine, will be given to shake his power for one single moment, or to change his position in this House. I am sure that the noble lord is not inaccessible to appeals made to him from honest motives and with no unfriendly feeling. The noble lord has been for more than forty years a Member of this House. Before I was born he sat upon the Treasury Bench, and he has spent his life in the service of his country. He is no longer young, and his life has extended almost to the term allotted to <sup>man.</sup> ~~to~~ I would ask, I would entreat, the noble lord ~~to take a~~

course which, when he looks back upon his whole political career — whatever he may therein find to be pleased with, whatever to regret — cannot but be a source of gratification to him. By adopting that course he would have the satisfaction of reflecting that, having obtained the object of his laudable ambition — having become the foremost subject of the Crown, the director of, it may be, the destinies of his country, and the presiding genius in her councils — he had achieved a still higher and nobler ambition: that he had returned the sword to the scabbard — that at his word torrents of blood had ceased to flow — that he had restored tranquillity to Europe, and saved this country from the indescribable calamities of war."

The language of Mr. Bright was couched mainly in familiar terms, which only partially disclosed his purpose, till it flashed upon the audience in some telling fact suddenly introduced, in some striking and felicitous allusion, or in some splendid figure throwing a flood of light upon the whole subject. His delivery, though not so animated as Mr. Gladstone's, was masterly in every sentence, and as carefully studied as his words, with a view to its persuasive effect. He understood and practised the art of modulation so as to express every shade of feeling; and by keeping his fine, sonorous voice well below its full com-

pass he was able to do this and make himself easily heard without visible effort throughout a long oration.

American orators show a larger sense of humour, and a keener appreciation of the importance of keeping in touch with the audience, than English orators. They have also a finer elocution. In these points, undoubtedly, English speakers have much to learn from the Americans. What the Americans might learn from the best English speakers is, the impressiveness of rhetorical restraint, and the prudence of keeping at a lower flight, when the matter of the speech does not justify a soaring style. But to the English student may be cordially recommended the speeches of the orators of the revolutionary war, still more warmly those of the anti-slavery period, the speeches of Webster, Calhoun, Clay, Wendell Phillips, Sumner, Beecher, Douglas, and Everett, to mention only a few of those whose eloquence forms an inseparable part of the history of their country. President Lincoln's short speech on the field of Gettysburg is an oratorical gem of the purest quality, a masterpiece of rhetorical art, and a striking example of condensation. It was delivered on the 19th



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of November, 1863, during the war between North and South. It was in these words:

“Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

“Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

“But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate — we cannot consecrate — we cannot hallow — this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us — that from these honoured dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion — that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain — that this nation, under God,

shall have a new birth of freedom — and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

Mr. Edward Everett, who had delivered the formal oration of the day, in writing to Mr. Lincoln, handsomely said: “I should be glad if I could flatter myself that I came as near to the central idea of the occasion in two hours as you did in two minutes.”

## CHAPTER XI

### THE OCCASIONAL SPEAKER

**M**ANY persons who have neither time nor inclination for the practice of oratory are sometimes obliged, in the discharge of social or official duties, to address a public assembly. They belong to a large class who may be described as occasional speakers. Their want of practice in speaking naturally places them at a disadvantage when speeches have to be made, and the great variety of subjects which, in the course of a single year, they may be called upon to handle might well perplex orators of considerable experience. The occasional speaker stands therefore in a different category from the regular student of oratory to whom what I have said in the foregoing chapters is addressed, and I should like now to engage his attention for a moment while considering some of the difficulties which he may encounter and the best way to overcome them. I assume that he has glanced over the earlier part of this volume

without however entering upon the studies therein recommended. He does not aspire to oratorical eminence, but he would like to say what ought to be said on certain occasions, in a simple, manly fashion, worthy of himself and of his position in his own community.

The occasional speaker, if he be a learned man, ought not to be at a loss for topics of discourse, whatever occasion presents itself. He may, however, fail in the choice of those which are appropriate, through want of sympathy with his audience, arising from ignorance of their character and feelings, and a want of acquaintance with the business and affairs which interest them. To mention this defect is to suggest its remedy. The preparation of a speech to one not accustomed to speaking, however able and well-informed he may be, requires method and consideration. Where ability and information are wanting or deficient it follows that there is all the more need for careful thinking. But to all the method of preparation seems to me to be prescribed by the necessity of the case. A topic, or several kindred topics, according to the importance of the occasion, must be chosen and noted down on paper, as they suggest themselves, in the roughest and readiest manner.

There is no need to determine at first in what order they shall appear in the speech. When they are all subjected to a process of reflection each point will fall naturally into its proper place in the mind and may then be rearranged on paper in the order finally selected. The intending speaker who does not know the subject must obviously seek his material in books or in the interrogation of those who do know it. Having acquired this knowledge he must then decide whether he will speak from the skeleton notes which he has set down, and which barely enumerate the topics he has chosen, or will write out his speech and commit it to memory. If the occasion is not very important I should recommend the first course mentioned. If it be, the unpractised speaker would be well advised in adopting the second. The principle which should guide him in the choice of language is a very simple one. He should without hesitation or misgiving use the language which comes naturally and spontaneously from himself, which is suited to his own character, and which therefore he is accustomed to use on ordinary occasions. If his subject be a serious one he will remember the language he is in the habit of using in the transaction of serious business, if it be sus-

ceptible of lighter treatment he will recall the ease and freedom of more cheerful associations; but there should be no straining after an unattainable grandeur of words which may be foreign alike to the speaker, the subject, the audience, and the occasion—no indulgence in that vice of affectation which is fatal to the least success in the art of oratory.

The difficulties which beset the occasional speaker are complicated by the great variety of subjects which come before him for treatment. Local business, whether of the parish, the town, or the county, may often require him to speak when he would much prefer to be silent. He may be called upon for an address at the opening of a school or a library, an exposition, a park, or a recreation-ground. The celebration of an anniversary, the dedication of a building to religious uses, the laying of a foundation stone, the unveiling of a monument, or a congratulatory dinner may be the occasion of his speech; and it is impossible to determine precisely beforehand what ought to be said. I always notice myself how unusual subjects are treated by other speakers so as to learn something of the nature of the treatment of which those subjects are susceptible, and I think the occasional speaker should

search the newspapers for his examples, remembering at the same time that his own performance must have local colour, and that it must be adapted to his audience and to the occasion which has called it forth. A speaker of this class who can read well need never hesitate about writing out his speech and reading it to his audience. If, however, having written it he means to learn it by heart he would do well to divide it into passages, each passage dealing with a single aspect of his theme, and then commit it to memory passage by passage. By making a note of the last line of one passage and of the opening line of the next he will be able, at a glance, to connect them all in his memory and deliver them easily and effectively. Occasional speeches may be of all degrees of excellence, but if we are to study models at all they should be the best of their kind that are available.

The art of making a happy speech on a purely social occasion, where persons of all classes, and of every shade of opinion, are assembled is rare because it is the fruit of varied talents seldom united in the same person. The Royal Academy banquet affords, once a year, a favourable opportunity for its exercise, and many of the speeches delivered there

reach the highest standard of which this art is capable. Their merits vary and the eloquence of one Academy banquet cannot always bear comparison with that of another. The speeches of successive Presidents however are usually models of graceful and polished oratory. The high official personages, who address the Academy and its guests, at these functions, are no doubt fettered by self-imposed but necessary restrictions which confine them to a somewhat conventional style of utterance, unless indeed the high official happens to be a Gladstone, or a Disraeli, whose genius no convention can weaken or impair, and who wins an additional triumph from every situation, no matter how delicate or complex it may be. I select as a perfect example of unconventional oratory the very eloquent speech delivered by Admiral Sir John Fisher<sup>1</sup> at the Academy banquet of 1903. Its fine, breezy humour thinly veiling the serious purpose of the speaker, could not fail to provoke the hearty laughter and loud cheers with which it was received.

“Mr. President, your Royal Highnesses, your Excellencies, my Lords and Gentlemen: The Navy always readily appreciates the kind words in which

<sup>1</sup> Then Vice-Admiral.



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this toast is proposed, and also the kind manner in which it is always received. I beg to thank you, Mr. President, for your kind reference to Captain Percy Scott, which was so well deserved. He was indeed a handy man (cheers). Personally I do not feel so happy on this occasion as I did last year when I had no speech to make. I always think on these occasions of the first time I went to sea on board my first ship, a little sailing two-decker, and I saw inscribed in great big gold letters the one word 'Silence' (laughter). Underneath was another good motto, 'Deeds, not words' (laughter and cheers). I have put that into every ship I have commanded since (laughter and cheers). This leads me to another motto which is better still, and brings me to the point of what I have to say in reply to the toast. When I was commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean I went to inspect a small destroyer, only 260 tons, but with such pride and swagger that she might have been 16,000 tons (laughter). The lieutenant in command took me round. She was in beautiful order, and I came aft to the wheel, and saw there *Ut Veniant Omnes*. 'Hallo,' I said, 'what the deuce is that?' (laughter). Saluting me, he said, 'Let 'em all come,' (great laughter and cheers). That was not boasting, that was the sense of conscious efficiency — (laughter) — the sense that permeates the whole fleet (cheers) — and I used to think, as the admiral, it would be irresistible, provided the admiral's up to the mark. It is a good thing for everybody to know that there has

been a tremendous change since the old time. In regard to naval warfare history is a record of exploded ideas (laughter and cheers). In the old days they were sailors' battles; now they are admirals' battles. I should like to recall to you the greatest battle at sea ever fought. What was the central episode of that? Nelson receiving his deathwound. What was he doing? Walking up and down on the quarter-deck arm in arm with his captain. It is dramatically described by an onlooker. His secretary is shot down; he turns round and says, 'Take him down to the cockpit,' and then he goes on walking up and down, having a yarn with his captain. What does that mean? It means that in the old days the admiral took the fleet into action, each ship got alongside the enemy, and as Nelson finely said, they got into their proper places — (cheers) — and then the admiral had not much more to do. The ships were touching one another nearly, the bos'un went with some rope and lashed them together so as to make them quite comfortable (laughter) and the sailors loaded and fired away till it was time to board. But what is the case now? It is conceivable that within twenty minutes of sighting the enemy on the horizon the action will have commenced, and on the disposition of the ships by the admiral, on his tactics, the battle would depend, for all the guns in the world are no good if the gunners cannot see the enemy. In that way I wish to tell you how much depends on the admirals now and on their education. Joined with this spirit, of which the young lieutenant

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I mentioned is an indication, permeating the whole service, we require fearless, vigorous and progressive administration, full of reform (cheers), never lying on its oars (for to stop is to go back), and forecasting every eventuality. I will just take two instances at hazard. Look at the submarine boat and wireless telegraphy. When they are perfected, we do not know what a revolution will come about. In their inception they were the weapons of the weak. I see here a man who went down in a submarine boat, my friend Sir Wm. White, and he thought that he was never coming up again (cheers). Now they loom large as the weapons of the strong. Will they beat the enemy in their own waters, is there the slightest fear of an invasion. I might mention other subjects, but the great fact which I come to is that we are realising that on the British Navy rests the British Empire (cheers). Nothing else is of any use without it, not even the Army (here the gallant admiral, amid laughter, turned to Mr. Brodrick,<sup>1</sup> who sat near him). No soldier can go anywhere unless a sailor carries him there on his back (laughter). I am not disparaging the Army. I am looking forward to their coming to sea with us again, as they did in the old days. Nelson had three regiments of infantry with him at the battle of Cape St. Vincent (cheers). The Secretary for War particularly asked me to allude to the Army, or else I would not have done it (loud laughter). In conclusion, I assure you that the Navy and the Ad-

<sup>1</sup> Then Secretary of War.

miralty recognise their responsibility. I think I may say that we now have a Board of Admiralty that is united, progressive, and determined (cheers), and you may sleep quietly in your beds (loud cheers and laughter)."

Charles Dickens was a great master of the occasional address. All his speeches may be heartily commended for purity and simplicity of language, nobility of sentiment, the most delicate wit, the tenderest pathos, and an unaffected eloquence which makes very pleasant reading, and must have been heard with delight. The addresses which he delivered in America during his visit to that country in 1842 were particularly happy, as the following extracts will show. Speaking at Boston he said:

"There is one other point connected with the labours (if I may call them so) that you hold in such generous esteem, to which I cannot help adverting. I cannot help expressing the delight, the more than happiness it was to me to find so strong an interest awakened on this side of the water, in favour of that little heroine of mine <sup>1</sup> to whom your president has made allusion, who died in her youth. I had letters about that child, in England, from the dwellers in log houses among the morasses, and swamps, and densest

<sup>1</sup> Nell, in the *Old Curiosity Shop*.

forests, and deep solitude of the Far West. Many a sturdy hand, hard with the axe and spade, and browned by the summer's sun, has taken up the pen, and written to me a little history of domestic joy or sorrow, always coupled, I am proud to say, with something of interest in that little tale, or some comfort or happiness derived from it, and my correspondent has always addressed me not as a writer of books for sale, resident some four or five thousand miles away, but as a friend to whom he might freely impart the joys and sorrows of his own fireside. Many a mother — I could reckon them now by dozens, not by units — has done the like, and has told me how she lost such a child at such a time, and where she lay buried, and how good she was, and how in this or that respect, she resembles Nell! I do assure you that no circumstance of my life has given me one hundredth part of the gratification I have derived from this source. I was wavering at the time whether or not to wind up my clock,<sup>2</sup> and come and see this country, and this decided me. I felt as if it were a positive duty; as if I were bound to pack up my clothes, and come and see my friends; and even now I have such an odd sensation in connection with these things, that you have no chance of spoiling me. I feel as though we were agreeing, as indeed we are if we substitute for fictitious characters the classes from which they are drawn, about third parties, in whom we had a common interest. At every new act of kindness on your part,

2 "Master Humphrey's Clock."



mists of distant ages. I have never heard it contradicted that when Noah stepped out of the ark the Lord Mayor of London was there to welcome him. (Loud laughter.) Why, sir, yours is the most antique office of which we have any knowledge among the English people. The gaudy emblem which you wear upon your breast as its official badge I believe you are the 701st Lord Mayor in unbroken succession to wear. (Hear, hear.) One hundred years before the discovery of America it was worn by Richard Whittington, who left such a name behind him, and for two hundred years before that it was worn by your predecessors in office — two hundred years before he listened to the chimes of Bow Bells singing, ‘Turn again, turn again, Whittington, thrice Lord Mayor of London.’ (Cheers.) I have said this, my Lord Mayor, to satisfy you of the immense esteem, honour, and cordiality with which you would be received if you could really cross the Atlantic and visit us. Now I am to speak for the foreign Ministers. His Majesty’s Ministers are absolutely free of speech. In Parliament and in the nation at large they can say, and ought to say, exactly their mind, for, as the omnipotence of Parliament is the bedrock of the British Constitution, the power of speech amongst his Majesty’s Ministers is necessarily the very power of government itself. (Laughter and cheers.) But the foreign Ministers, if I were to say that we are tonguetied, some of my colleagues might object very seriously — (laughter) — but we are all, as I believe,

sent here under instructions to be discreet and silent upon all questions of public interest. (Laughter.) His Majesty's Ministers are the hardest-worked and, as they believe, the best-abused men in the nation, while the foreign Ministers are really favourites of fortune (laughter) — they are here each attending to his own duties and purposes, each maintaining to the best of his ability the dignity and honour of his own country, but nevertheless with comparative leisure and tranquillity, basking at times in the sunshine of Royalty, and always presenting themselves distinguished only by the brilliancy or sombreness of the uniforms they are permitted to wear. (Laughter.) I have listened very carefully to what the Prime Minister said on the subject of that happy end which has been reached in the only matter of controversy that threatened at any time to create mischief or distrust between these two great English-speaking people. (Cheers.) I admire the spirit in which he has referred to it, and I have only to say that, while we believe ample justice has been done by the tribunal to both parties and all parties concerned, we believe that that great result is due more than to any one thing or man to the sense of justice, the manly courage, the devotion to duty, of the Lord Chief Justice of England, who presided. (Loud Cheers.) I read, too, Mr. Aylesworth's very magnanimous and handsome speech on his arrival in his native country, and, if I rightly understand it and the generous-minded people of Canada and Great Britain, the termination of this long-standing con-



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trovery has made both the people of Canada and the people of the United States better friends with Great Britain — better friends with this Mother Country of them both — than ever before. (Loud cheers.) In direct connection with that topic I wish to refer to the memory of a distinguished and much-loved diplomatist, whose untimely death threw both of these countries into sincere and sympathetic mourning. I allude, of course, to Sir Michael Herbert, who possessed a combination of qualities rarely, if ever, found in any single man to fit him for the great office that he served and for the great duties that devolved upon him. His magnificent abilities, exercised and perfected by long training and experience, his exalted character, his wonderful caution, prudence, and tact — all these made him a rare example of the man who should be selected to conduct the relations between two such countries as yours and ours. (Hear, hear.) But there was something more than that, something even finer than all — his magnificent qualities of intellect and character. There was a personal charm about the man — a peculiar and unusual tenderness of nature that added to his other great qualities an immeasurable power. I think he came to that by a sort of influence of heredity. I believe that peculiar charm was a rare and rich product of English culture and of English race. You all remember the delightful epitaph placed on the grave of his great ancestress, who united the blood of the Sidneys and Herberts in that noble strain of which he and his fathers were so justly proud:

Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother;  
Death, ere thou shalt slay another  
Learned, fair and wise as she,  
Time shall fling his dart at thee.

It seems to me that to the late Ambassador the same sentiments, very gently changed, could be appropriately applied.

“And now I wonder whether these two great nations might not properly unite in honouring this delightful man, who has been lost to both — and such a loss! It seems to me that there is a possible way, growing out of the solution of this very problem to which the Prime Minister has referred, and in the settlement of which Sir Michael Herbert bore so powerful a hand. You know that there is no such earthly immortality as the name of a man or a family planted on some great landmark on the face of the globe. Such names affecting mountains, rivers, bays, are more lasting than brass or marble, as enduring as the divisions to which they are applied. In this very controversy to which reference has been made the narrative of Vancouver, the great explorer of that country, was brought forward. When he had fully explored and mapped that great arm of the sea which has been made the subject of successful controversy on the part of Great Britain, ‘We,’ he said, ‘named it Portland Canal in honour of the noble family of Bentinck, and it will honour their name to the end of time.’ Now, why should we not, in the actual delimitation of this boundary line, to which

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the treaty, controversy and decision referred, select some magnificent mountain peak on the line itself, towering above all its immediate neighbours, lifting its sublime and soaring summit to the Arctic skies, and affix to it the name of Herbert? (loud cheers) — so that for all time to come it might stand there until the mountains fall, as a monument to his splendid services, to his noble character, and to his great achievements.” (Renewed cheers.)

My last quotation in this branch of oratory shall be from a speech delivered at a dinner of the Corporation of Godalming by Alderman Page. Like the speeches of Sir John Fisher and Mr. Choate it is marked by a pungent wit and a refined humour, though, as the occasion required, pitched in a much lower key than either of them.

### “THE MEMBER FOR THE DIVISION”

Alderman Page, who had a flattering reception, submitted the toast of “The Member for the Division,” which was enthusiastically received. In a few humorous observations upon the difficulty of distributing the toasts, he said:

“The Godalming Corporation felt that there was some incongruity in associating the ever green vivacity and genial humour of the Lord Lieutenant with the

austere dulness of that august body. (Laughter.) Then it was felt that to allude to the health of the House of Commons at the present time might seem indecorous. (Laughter.) They heard everywhere that it was breaking up, that it was on the verge of dissolution, that it was suffering from internal complications, and had even begun to wander in its talk (laughter), while he heard that the chief advisor of the patient was in a state of philosophic doubt (laughter) as to whether it was not necessary to call in another opinion. As to the Government it had lately been taking to the study of political economy, which was a science that might rival even theology as the prolific mother of schism and of sects. (Laughter.) Coming to the toast of 'Our Member,' he said, unfortunately, in dealing with a distinguished political career, he was forbidden to say anything about politics. He could say much, but have no opinion; he could use many words, but have no judgment. (Laughter.) But that was a matter of perfect unimportance, because the political judgment of that constituency had been frequently and adequately expressed by the ballot box, and to that democratic instrument, even Aldermen, they were told, must bow in silence. (Laughter.) If he might not be political, he really felt that, if he could he should be poetical (laughter), because when they contemplated the relationship that existed between this constituency and its member, they seemed to come from a world of change and strife into the idyllic region of peace and perennial attachment.

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(Applause.) They had had various wooers, gifted and eloquent; they had perhaps even encouraged their advances (laughter), but certainly (with a turn of the head towards Mr. Cowan) it had never yet gone further than a flirtation. (Laughter and applause.) They were looking forward to celebrating their silver wedding with Mr. Brodrick, but he must warn them that there was one small subject, one little rift within the lute, of which Mr. Brodrick should be careful. The Corporation of Godalming had observed with regret that on a recent occasion their member made certain remarks on the laws of cricket with which they disagreed. There was in that Corporation at least two Aldermen, and a great number of councillors, who were proficient in that sport, and they, speaking not from theory, but from experience, considered the present size of the wicket was perfectly adequate. (Loud laughter.) They felt that the stumps were like the rates, that they would not bear being heightened. (Laughter.) They felt that to make any addition either to one or the other, if they did it even to the extent of a penny piece (laughter), where would the Godalming Corporation be? (Laughter.) They were greeting Mr. Brodrick that night not merely as their member, but as a distinguished minister of His Majesty's Government. (Applause.) He had filled a succession of great offices, and he was on that occasion with them holding the high and responsible post of Secretary of State for India. (Applause.) That was a happy position. He was no longer compelled

to consider with an anxious mind the critical judgment of nursery-maids as to the exact uniform which made a Life Guardsman most irresistible. (Laughter.) He was no longer harried by that vast host of military critics who, if they would but exchange the pen for the sword, would, by their very number and temper, make the British Army a terror to the world. (Loud laughter.) He would not dwell that night upon the success of the expedition to Tibet, remarkable and romantic as the character of that expedition was, because he wished to say one word upon a larger theme. They had heard a good deal lately of the word imperial. It had been used sometimes in a novel sense, and he believed there was a popular notion that it was first manufactured in Birmingham (laughter), but whether it was Birmingham, or Hughenden, or wherever it might be, he would remind them that it was at least 2,000 years old, and that the great poet of the great nation who first employed it, when he desired to remind the Romans of their high destinies, recalled to them that the first of imperial arts was to establish the ways of peace. (Hear, hear.) He believed that the Indian Government had in these late years interpreted the meaning of imperialism by that worthy definition. (Applause.) By the quiet but ungrudging devotion of her best sons this country had established in India a security, a freedom, and a prosperity which in all her age-long history she had never before known. There had been little that had been dramatic, little that had been sensational; but if it

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were the real test of imperial domination to do at least something to lessen the vast sum of human ill, and to ward off as far as might be the ravages of pestilence, and of famine, and to add a little to the scanty subsistence, and often scantier joys of those teeming millions, then he said that the Government of India might claim a position in the universal record of empire which certainly had no parallel. (Applause.) He thought without diversity of party they were all justly proud that their member should be there that night as the worthy associate of men like Lord Curzon and Lord Kitchener, in that illustrious and beneficent work. (Applause.) Continuing, he said they greeted Mr. Brodrick warmly as one who, in his long career, had deserved their honour for his distinguished public services. (Applause.) They also greeted him with a more familiar and almost domestic interest as one who had always maintained the good traditions of his house — to win the esteem, the good will, and the affection of those with whom they lived was the best and happiest of human distinctions, because it was a distinction which could equally ennoble and illustrate the humblest life, and lend a new grace and dignity even to the highest." (Loud applause.)

## CHAPTER XII

### CONCLUSION

**W**E have now reached the point when it is proper to retrace briefly the ground over which we have been travelling, and to gather up the results obtained. The number of examples might of course be multiplied; but it is better for the student that he should be left to his own researches when a fair variety have been brought to his notice, and the fields in which others may be found in abundance have been pointed out to him. If what I have urged in the first chapter has any weight with the reader, he will not voluntarily attempt to speak in public, or allow himself to be drawn into any debate before an audience, until he is able to articulate so clearly and distinctly that every member of the audience can hear him without making an effort to listen. And if the management of the voice be the first step in oratory, the mastery of the facts, as I have tried to show, is the second. It is only when a speaker knows



all the essential facts of his subject, and how to handle them, that he can frame the rhetorical appeals, select the appropriate illustrations, and invent the telling arguments that may be required to persuade and convince his hearers. A knowledge of rhetoric, even in the most popular sense of the term, implies a knowledge of the passions through which men are moved or controlled; it presupposes that the orator can only speak effectively to men, as a man, as one who shares their common feelings, and who, therefore, knows his audience, and, out of the fulness of that knowledge, forges the invisible bonds by which he unites them to himself in unquestioning confidence and heartfelt sympathy. In considering the uses of rhetoric we have seen that it is a natural and not an artificial means of persuasion, that men are rhetorical in speech, not from choice, but from necessity, that as a rule when they are most deeply moved, and most truly in earnest, they are most powerful and eloquent in expression, if they express themselves at all.

Advancing a stage further we have seen that it is not alone by an appeal to their passions that men are influenced, but also by arguments addressed, in logical form, to their

reasoning faculties; and we have acquired some elementary knowledge, at least, of the principles by which the reasoning process is governed, and by the observance of which truth is established. We have considered also the advantages of the practice of extempore speaking, and how it may be learned; and the importance of a good delivery has been urged together with suggestions as to the means of attaining it. The chapters devoted to examples of ancient and modern eloquence will, it is hoped, be useful as an introduction to the study of oratorical style. But the style of a writer or speaker must be developed from within. It is not a matter of external application; and the chief use of models is to show us what is feasible, and to illustrate method and form. A persistent, incorruptible sincerity is an essential condition of greatness in style. "So long," says Ruskin, "as no words are uttered but in faithfulness, so long the art of language goes on exalting itself; but the moment it is shaped and chiselled on external principles it falls into frivolity and perishes." And again—"No man is worth reading to form your style who does not mean what he says; nor was any great style ever invented but by some man who meant what he

said." And, lest we should be at all solicitous on this head, the eloquent critic further assures us that "language becomes accurate if the speaker desires to be true; clear, if he speaks with sympathy and a desire to be intelligible; powerful, if he has earnestness, and pleasant if he has sense of rhythm and order."

The power of forcible and eloquent expression is often a free gift of nature to be used at nature's bidding in moments of strong emotion. Overwhelming joy, intolerable grief, a sense of insult, or of wrong, the passion of revenge, love, or hatred, righteous indignation, or great natural affection, will endow a speaker with an eloquence that is above and beyond all art. In these cases the voice of untutored nature cries aloud with a thrilling felicity, with a startling and convincing veracity. I remember an instance in a criminal trial where this natural gift contrasted strikingly with the studied eloquence of the professional advocate. A poor old woman who had deeply felt the shame of the prosecution of her son, and who suffered all the agony of suspense during the days of his trial, relieved her mind of his acquittal, not by a cry of joy, but by a most pathetic description of her highly-wrought feelings: she exclaimed,

"Ah, my son, for three days my heart has been draggin' on the ground for you." An expression, Homeric in its boldness and vigour, but very appropriate surely to the occasion! This natural eloquence has, however, its limitations. It was not the afflicted mother of the accused, but his trained advocate that secured his acquittal. I always think of this incident whenever I am asked to state the difference between what is natural and what is acquired in the power of oratory. Nature unaided by art does not enable us to put the facts of a case in the most convincing form possible, nor does it endow us with a knowledge of men. This twofold knowledge comes only from practice in speaking, and from experience of life. Unless a speaker understands his audience and can establish an intimate communion of thought and feeling between himself and them, he might as well not speak at all. Must he therefore be the pliant organ of their varying moods and prejudices, the responsive echo of their opinions and desires? Emphatically no! Whatever be the speaker's minor obligations, his supreme duty to his audience is to speak the truth. But he must take account of their moods and prejudices, opinions and desires, if he would persuade them in any di-

rection, and it is the reciprocal sympathy of speaker and audience that constitutes the triumph of eloquence. There is this peculiarity about the art of oratory that it must submit to the judgment of men in the mass. The orator cannot divide his audiences into sections, and address those sections in separate compartments; the educated here, and the illiterate there, the rich in one place, and the poor in another, the old apart from the young. Except in rare cases this is impossible. A book may be written, a song composed, a picture painted, or a statue carved, which is intended to minister only to the delight of a select few, whereas the orator addresses a crowd, whether he speaks in Parliament or in the market-place. This truth, once stated, is obvious, yet I venture to say that it is constantly ignored by public speakers of every description, and that their failure to realise it largely accounts for their inability to stir, to any great purpose, the audiences they address. They are thinking of classes when they ought to be thinking of men and women, and of that human nature which is always responsive to a genuine human appeal. Great oratory comes directly home to us all; not precisely in the same way to every one, for the dispositions

with which we listen are different; not carrying the same message exactly to each, but with a power and effect of some kind that all equally acknowledge. Now why is this, if it be not because it is, in the main, an appeal to emotions which we all share in common? When the orator speaks we know infallibly whether we are moved, or persuaded, or convinced. There is no appeal from our judgment on the merits of the speech, no matter what may be the merits of the cause. The speaker has failed or succeeded, or he has obtained a result which is indifferent, and we dismiss all thought of it from our minds. I do not say that the dull or ignorant listener derives the same impressions from the discussion of a difficult and complicated subject, that are obtained by one who is bright and well-informed. But, if the audience is composed of both classes, I do contend that the speaker must address himself to both. He must adapt himself to the lower intelligence of the one, and the higher intelligence of the other, at the same moment; in other words, he must express himself in language that will be understood and felt by all.

A contributor to the *Quarterly Review*,

writing on Mr. Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, makes the following pregnant observation:

“Nor is any man a great orator who has not many of the gifts of a great actor — his command of gesture, his variety and grace of elocution, his mobility of feature, his instant sympathy with the ethical tone of this or that situation, his power of evoking that sympathy in every member of his audience; and this is surely what Demosthenes meant by making *ὑπόκρισις* — acting not action — the secret of all oratory.

This is well said, but the writer might have gone further, and insisted that the great orator must be not only an actor, but a dramatist as well. He must indeed have the dramatic instinct in the first place, the power of conceiving the parts and inventing the situations of which he is the interpreter to the audience. His introduction of the subject of his address; his statement of facts, his proofs, his illustrations, are the several acts of the drama leading up to the denouement, which stamps indelibly on the hearts of his hearers the final impression at which he aims. Then it is equally true that oratory which is deficient in ethical quality can never have more than a temporary effect, however brilliant it may be. This world of men and women is a moral

world, and, like the physical world, it has its successions of night and day. The sun is not absent though we may not always bask in the effulgence of its beams. It sustains life by its heat even when its light is temporarily withdrawn; and there is in the heart of man a love of justice, and an abiding faith in the beauty of righteousness, though sometimes passion and prejudice and error conceal them from our view. The orator who cannot appeal to the moral sense of mankind is shorn of more than half his power. He labours under a disqualification which is fatal to his mission. It was the opinion of one of the most sagacious of the ancients that "if a community could be found in which no one did wrong an orator would be as superfluous among its innocent people as a physician among the healthy."<sup>1</sup> To defend the right was, in the judgment of Tacitus, the orator's primary duty. Let him then maintain the high standard of his office, and employ his eloquence to evoke the public spirit of his time, and the moral purpose of his day and generation. Without great motives there can be no great speech. And no great motive will shrink from the consequences of unpopular truth. The speaker who is al-

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus, *The Dialogue*.



ways thinking of what his party will say, or his neighbours will say, or his constituency will say, or his congregation will say, or who trembles for his business or his reputation, when duty bids him speak, will never utter the momentous word that settles mighty issues, and influences the fate of kingdoms; but he who bravely puts all to hazard, in a just cause, and throws his own personality unreservedly into the argument, for truth, and right, and honour, becomes at once the teacher and the benefactor, and it may be, the saviour of his country.

The ethics of professional advocacy is a question of great public interest which crops up from time to time because it has never been finally settled. At the end of each controversy to which it gives rise, the individual is left to decide the matter for himself; and perhaps this is best for all concerned. But it seems to me that a little more candour on one side, and more knowledge on the other, might pave the way to a settlement. The lay public have not grasped the principle upon which, under our judicial system, the trial of any issue is conducted. It is simply this: the plaintiff and defendant are entitled to be heard either by themselves or by counsel, be-

fore the judge, or the judge and jury (if there be a jury in the case) decide upon the matter at issue between them. Where the right of being heard is denied there is no trial, and this right of being heard does not at all depend upon who is right and who is wrong in the action. That is the very point to be tried. Trying a case and judging a case are two different functions. The counsel on either side assist in the trial; they have no share in rendering the verdict or in pronouncing the judgment. Those who expect a barrister to refuse a brief in a bad case would impose upon him the duty of determining the case before trial. This is impracticable; but a plaintiff if he wishes can always have the opinion of counsel before commencing an action, and it is the duty of counsel to tell the client the truth, and nothing but the truth, as to whether the case is, in his view, good or bad in law, or doubtful, or worth testing. No barrister or solicitor is exempt at any time, or in any circumstances, from the obligations of the moral code, or of the code of honour, or of good manners; and if there are cases in which he disregards any of them, his transgression is precisely what it would be in any other man. So far the matter is clear enough;

but then it must be borne in mind that communications between the client, and his solicitor or counsel, are privileged, as having been made in confidence. No one would suggest that this confidence should be violated by the advocate, in the progress of a case; yet the case may be hopelessly and discredibly bad, and if it should prove to be so he is at liberty to withdraw from it altogether. This is what sometimes happens; the advocate returns his brief. Why this does not occur more frequently, considering the number of bad cases which occupy the time of our courts, is a question which cannot be lightly disposed of. It is a very serious thing, indeed, for an advocate to abandon his client. Some advocates will not admit that it is ever justifiable. That it is a grave step, not to be taken, except after the most careful consideration, all will acknowledge, and for this obvious reason, that the advocate cannot withdraw without *ipso facto* condemning his client, and for a further reason that, such is the uncertainty of human testimony, a man may possibly have right and justice on his side though all the facts adduced may be against him. The extreme, and as I think, an untenable view of the advocate's obligations to his client was put forward by

Lord Brougham in his defence of Queen Caroline. These are his words:

“An advocate, by the great duty he owes his client, knows in the discharge of that office but one person in the world — that client and none other. To save that client by all expedient means, he must not regard the alarm, the suffering, the torment, the destruction which he may bring on any other. In separating even the duties of a patriot from those of an advocate, and casting them off to the winds, he must go on, reckless of the consequences, if his fate should be to involve his country in confusion for his client’s protection.”

I am disposed to regard this remarkable passage of Brougham’s great speech as a burst of rhetoric, and nothing more, even though it occurs in a carefully prepared effort the peroration of which, as he tells us himself, he wrote twenty times over. It is not as extreme as it seems at the first blush; it is made up of “wild and whirling words” admirably adapted to their purpose, which was, to assert the glorious independence of the advocate, at a time when he was entrusted with a cause in which the monarch and the greatest in the land were on the other side. Brougham felt it to be necessary, in this case, as Erskine did in his defence of Paine, to assert his indepen-

dence. Erskine's words have a more direct bearing on the point under consideration.

"I will forever [he says], at all hazards, assert the dignity, independence, and integrity of the English Bar, without which impartial justice, the most valuable part of the English Constitution, can have no existence. From the moment that any advocate can be permitted to say that he will or will not stand between the Crown and the subject arraigned, in the court where he daily sits to practise, from that moment the liberties of England are at an end. If the advocate refuses to defend, from what he may think of the charge, or of the defence, he assumes the character of the judge; nay, he assumes it before the hour of judgment; and, in proportion to his rank and reputation, puts the heavy influence of, perhaps, a mistaken opinion into the scale against the accused, in whose favour the benevolent principle of English law makes all presumptions, and which commands the very judge to be his counsel."

The contradictory opinions of Boswell and Dr. Johnson, two laymen, may now be quoted. Johnson reasons out his view in answer to Boswell.

"I asked him [says the biographer], whether, as a moralist, he did not think that the practice of the law, in some degree, hurt the nice feeling of honesty.

Johnson: Why no, sir, if you act properly. You are not to deceive your clients with false representations of your opinion: you are not to tell lies to a judge.

Boswell: But what do you think of supporting a cause which you know to be bad?

Johnson: Sir, you do not know it to be good or bad till the judge determines it. I have said that you are to state facts fairly; so that your thinking, or what you call knowing, a cause to be bad, must be from reasoning, must be from supposing your arguments to be weak and inconclusive. But, sir, that is not enough. An argument which does not convince yourself, may convince the judge to whom you urge it; and if it does convince him, why, then, Sir, you are wrong, and he is right. It is his business to judge; and you are not to be confident in your own opinion that a cause is bad, but to say all you can for your client, and then hear the judge's opinion.

Boswell: But, Sir, does not affecting a warmth, and appearing to be clearly of one opinion, when you are in reality of another opinion, does not such dissimulation impair one's honesty? Is there not some danger that a lawyer may put on the same mask in common life, in the intercourse with his friends?

Johnson: Why no, Sir. Everybody knows you are paid for affecting warmth for your client; and it is therefore properly no dissimulation: the moment you come from the Bar you resume your usual behaviour."

This little dialogue gives much light. The careful reader will note, however, that Johnson's arguments have not equal cogency, and that while some do, others do not, meet Boswell's objections. The whole question, it seems to me, turns upon whether an advocate is justified in advancing arguments which are not based on his opinions. Johnson says he is, because the advocate is only the mouthpiece of the client, and in no sense identified with the merits of his cause. Arguments are not necessarily opinions; but the moralist may urge that they ought to be, and it is no answer to him to reply that under our judicial system they sometimes cannot be, that causes which may be bad must, in the interests of equity, be heard, and that accused persons who may be criminals, must, in the interests of justice, be defended. He will rejoin that he is not considering what is the best judicial system, or whether the best known be not capable of improvement, or whether there may not be a thousand reasons, drawn from convenience, in favour of the existing practice, but a simple question of morals. Thus brought to bay, the advocate's apologist will declare that if an advocate is not justified in supporting a cause which he believes to be bad, the judicial sys-

tem of the country must be radically amended. But he will place the responsibility of amending it on the moralist, and pending the accomplishment of a judicial revolution, he will reassure an anxious public in the words spoken at the Mansion House, London, on June 19, 1908, by Sir Robert Finlay, the Attorney-General:

“ There is nothing in the practice of the Bar which is in the slightest degree inconsistent with the most fastidious sense of honour. It is not the function of the Bar to raise false issues. The function of the Bar is to see that everything which can be fairly said on behalf of those concerned should be said. Cases of difficulty may of course arise; but I believe that extreme cases are, after all, best left to the professional instinct which to Members of the Bar has become a second nature, guided by the most honourable traditions.”

It is not the legal advocate only who is bound to shun false issues and misrepresentation. The political partisan is not entitled to plead party interest or the so-called interests of the country, or the world, in justification of any deliberate violation of truth; and least of all can the religious controversialist be excused by his zeal for the faith which he professes, for any departure from the most



